

NEW MEXICO ELECTION STUDY: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION, SECURITY, AND REFORM

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Executive Summary

Overview of the 2024 New Mexico General Election

The 2024 New Mexico General Election saw 928,290 voters participate out of 1.4 million registered voters, representing 59.6% of eligible voters. This rate is slightly lower than 2020 but consistent with recent presidential elections. Democrats continued to comprise a larger share of voters than registrants, while independent and non-major party voters were underrepresented in turnout. Same Day Registration was widely used and strongly supported by voters.

Voter experiences with the election process were overwhelmingly positive. Early in-person voting remained the dominant mode, used by 60% of voters, while vote-by-mail returned to pre-pandemic levels. Wait times were short, with most voters spending fewer than 10 minutes in line, and 96% reported poll workers were helpful. Most voters found polling locations easy to access and navigate.

In 2024 Same Day Registration (SDR) was used across the state by nearly 49,000 people with about 23,000 using SDR on Election Day. 72% of voters surveyed support this policy.

We asked voters what type of identification they provided at the polls. 52% of in-person voters statewide indicated that they provided the poll worker with the minimum identification--their name, address and birth year. But three in ten (30%) either were asked for (29%) or just provided (63%) a photo. We estimate that 85% of voters were identified correctly with the minimum voter ID or with the voter's preferred method, while 14% were identified incorrectly, and about 1% were uncertain. This is comparable to what we found in 2020.

Overall, voter confidence in ballot counting was high, with 85% of voters expressing confidence that their vote was counted as intended. Confidence was highest at the personal and local levels and lower at the national level. Consistent with prior research, confidence varied by partisanship, with Democrats reporting the highest levels and Republicans the lowest. Positive interactions with election officials and perceptions of ballot privacy were strongly associated with higher confidence.

Despite strong personal voting experiences, misperceptions about election processes persist. A substantial share of voters believe that ballot secrecy may be compromised or that election fraud occurs with some frequency, even though very few voters report personally observing any irregularities. These beliefs are strongly shaped by partisan differences.

Voters remain divided on election policy priorities. While a slight majority prioritize ensuring access to voting, nearly as many emphasize election security. Support for voter identification requirements is high overall but varies sharply by party. Voters generally support existing election procedures, including same-day registration, but strongly oppose transitioning to all-mail elections.

Taken together, the findings indicate that New Mexico's election system continues to perform effectively, with high levels of voter satisfaction and confidence. This is consistent with its

strong showing in 2022 as the top state in the election performance index. Nevertheless, we make a number of key recommendations throughout our report.

Preface. Introduction and Study Background

We want to take this opportunity to congratulate the state of New Mexico for being rated first in the nation on the Election Performance Index (EPI), which is administered by the MIT Data and Election Science Lab (MEDSL).¹ Since 2008 the EPI has ranked states on election administration policy and performance after each federal general election. This first in the nation status represents the hard work of the election community in New Mexico, especially the New Mexico County Clerks and their election staff, the New Mexico Secretary of State and her staff, poll workers across the state, and the students and faculty that have supported the biennial New Mexico Election Study over the same time period.

The 2024 New Mexico Election Study (NMES) is the tenth postelection report for the state of New Mexico focusing on election administration and election security. This effort represents a unique, continuous time-series of a state election administration unit, which is unparalleled. Figure 1.1. shows the components included in each biennial study. These include election observations, poll worker surveys, voter surveys, postelection audit review, poll worker training observation, election analysis and all kinds of sub questions and considerations over time, including queuing studies and vote by mail observation.

Table Preface.1 History of the New Mexico Election Study

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Election Observation	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Poll worker Survey	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Voter Survey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Postelection Audit		X	X							
Election Analysis							X	X	X	X
CD1	X									
Bernco				X	X	X				
Statewide		X	X			X	X	X	X	X

The first NMES was written in 2006 and contained 3 substantive chapters. The first chapter was the election observation report, the second was a poll worker report that primarily used data from a survey of NM poll workers, and the third chapter relied on data from a postelection voter survey. These three chapters were the result of three different NM election projects that came together that year. The first was a voter survey project in Congressional District 1, which at the time encompassed 95% of Bernalillo County, and was chosen because a competitive US House race was going on there. Professors Michael Alvarez from Caltech and Thad Hall from the University of Utah at that time were working with Ray Martinez, a former Clinton Aide, and had

¹ <https://elections.mit.edu/#/data/map>

gotten permission from NM Governor Bill Richardson and a few county clerks in the state to allow a small group of academic observers to visit precincts as independent election observers. Professor Alvarez invited UNM Professor Lonna Atkeson and a few graduate students onto the project. Professor Hall, for unknown reasons to this day, had a small amount of money to do a poll worker survey and asked if Lonna and her graduate students would implement it. We said, “of course!” We sent out surveys to 3 counties of poll workers that year: Bernalillo County (Bernco), Santa Fe, and Dona Ana. The 3 most populated counties in the state.

Since we began the NMES in 2006, the election ecosystem has been in constant flux with the adoption of new laws, regulations and technologies each election cycle. In 2006 New Mexico was a state leader in switching from DRE tabulators that had no paper trail, and that were practically brand new as they were purchased under the first Help America Vote Act (HAVA, 2001), to a unified statewide paper ballot optical scan system. NM used ES&S tabulators from 2005 until 2013; after that the state switched to Dominion vote tabulators, which are still in use today. The state began experimenting with vote centers in 2012 in the larger counties, allowing voters to vote at any voting location in their county. By 2020 all counties had moved to a vote center model. In 2020, NM adopted same-day registration (SDR) during early voting but only allowed new voters to register at the county clerk’s office. In 2022, voters could register at most early and Election Day voting locations. In 2024, New Mexico established a permanent opt-in list for mail-in voting which allows voters to sign up to receive a mail ballot for every future election in which they are qualified voters. Voters are removed from the permanent voting list when (1) the voter fails to return a mailed ballot in two consecutive elections, which must include one general election, (2) a voter’s ballot is returned as undeliverable, (3) the voter’s registration is cancelled, (4) the voter’s registration changes to a new county in New Mexico, (5) the voter requests to be removed.²

In Chapter 1 we report on over time trends in turnout and party registration along with information about the macro context in which the 2024 election took place. The 2024 election represents the 3rd contest in which Donald Trump ran as the Republican Party candidate. During this period there has been a great deal of change in the electorate. We report these trends and take a close look at how New Mexico has changed during this election cycle. Data for this section come from the New Mexico Voter Registration File, other administrative data, and records on candidate spending, all of which provide descriptive information about the voting electorate in the 2024 election.

In Chapters 2 and 3 we examine a statewide survey of voters and compare the results to previous statewide surveys. To help evaluate the efficiency and quality of the election, the postelection voter survey asks about voter experiences with and their attitudes toward the election process. Voter experiences with their ballots, the condition of their polling site, and their interactions with poll workers, or other election officials all provide important evidence about the voting process, voter confidence, and voter beliefs in the security and legitimacy of election outcomes.³

² See <https://www.sos.nm.gov/voting-and-elections/voter-information-portal-nmvote-org/absentee-and-early-voting/> for more details on vote by mail rules and procedures.

³ See R. Michael Alvarez, Lonna Rae Atkeson and Thad E. Hall. 2013. *Evaluating Elections: A Handbook of Methods and Standards*. Cambridge University Press; Lonna Rae Atkeson and Kyle L. Saunders, 2007, “Voter Confidence: A Local Matter?” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40(October):655-660; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson,

This year, under separate cover, we present the 2024 election observation report, which includes an assessment of the value of election observation to voter confidence.

Funding for this project came from the University of New Mexico, the LeRoy Collins Institute at Florida State University, the New Mexico Secretary of State, and Public Agenda.

and Kelly D. Patterson, 2007, "Poll Workers and the Vitality of Democracy: An Early Assessment," *PS: Political Science and Society*, 647-654; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, 2009, "The Human Dimension of Elections: How Poll Workers Shape Public Confidence in Elections," *Political Research Quarterly* 62(2): 507-522.

Chapter 1. Overview of the 2024 New Mexico Election

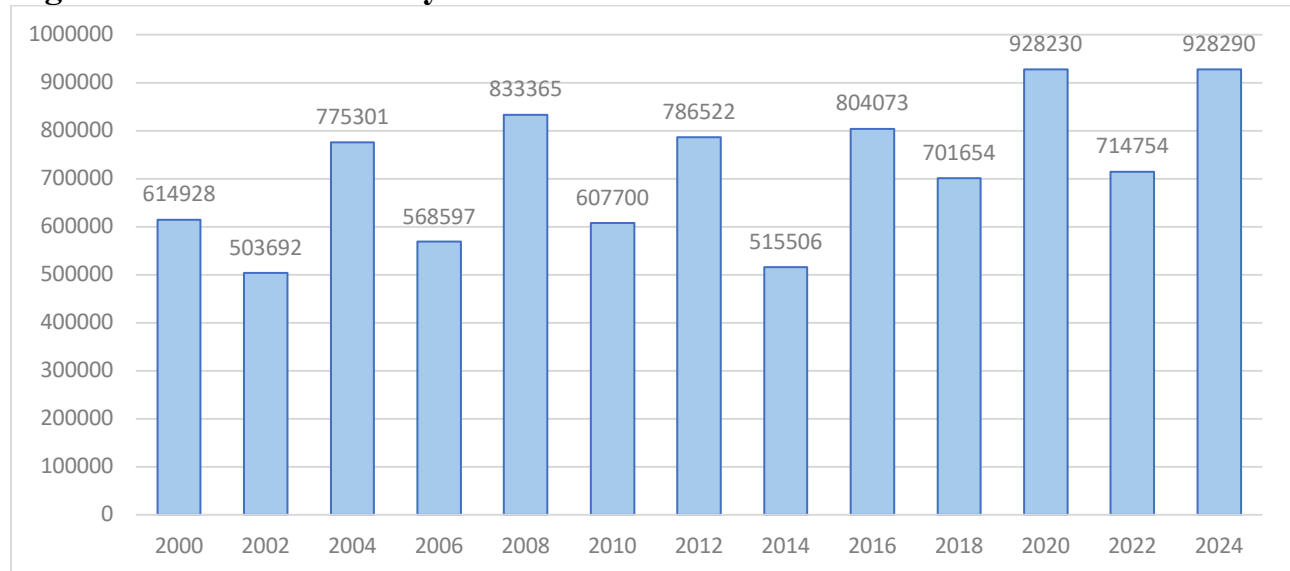
1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 examines the characteristics of the New Mexico (NM) electorate for the 2024 presidential election and places these in a historical context. For this chapter, we rely mostly on administrative data, especially the NM voter registration file, as well as the official canvass, and other state and national administrative data.⁴

1.2 Voter Turnout

According to the New Mexico Secretary of State Office, 928,290 New Mexicans voted out of 1,406,281 registered voters in 2024. Figure 1.1 shows the number of NM voters participating in each election since 2000. The 2024 presidential election had the largest number of voters, just barely edging 2020 by 60 voters. Figure 1.2 shows turnout as a percentage of eligible voters regardless of their registration status.⁵ In 2024 it was 59.6%, which was consistent with turnout in 2020 (60.5%), 2008 (61.2%) and 2004 (60.4%), but much higher than 2012 (54.8%) or 2016 (54.9%).

Figure 1.1. NM Turnout by the Numbers



⁴ The voter registration file had a time stamp of November 26, 2024.

⁵ The voting eligible data comes from the University of Florida Election Lab (<https://election.lab.ufl.edu/voter-turnout/>).

Figure 1.2. NM Turnout as a % of Eligible Voters



Figure 1.3. shows NM turnout as a percentage of eligible voters compared to average US turnout since 2000. NM’s turnout was very close to the US average through most of the 2000s. In the 2010s, turnout drifted lower.⁶ In 2012 it was 3.8% lower than the US average, in 2016 it was 5.3% lower, in 2020 it was 5.5% lower, and in 2024 it was 4.5% lower. In the early 2000s NM was a more competitive state at both the presidential and state levels which resulted in more resources pouring into mobilization campaigns. With those declines in competition also came a decline in turnout.

Figure 1.3. Percent Voting Eligible NM & US Turnout, 2000-2024

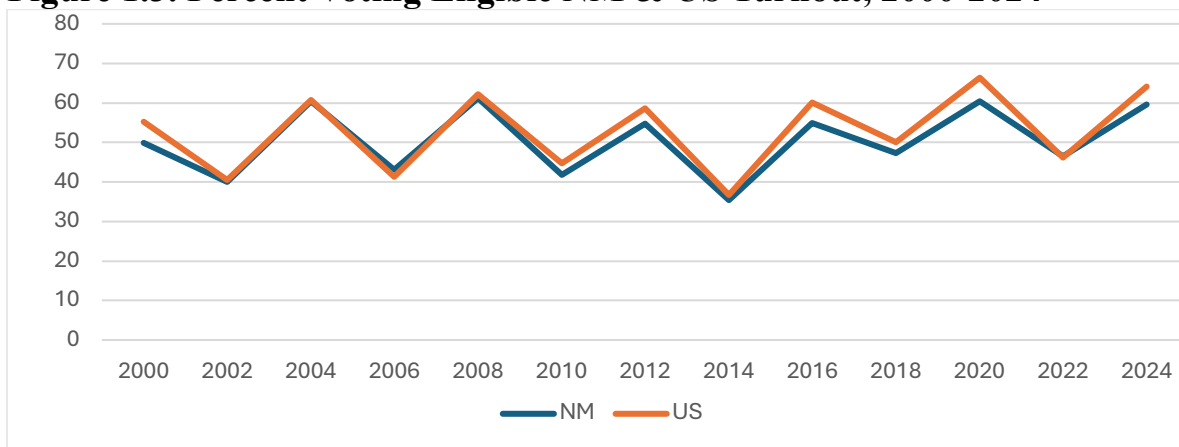
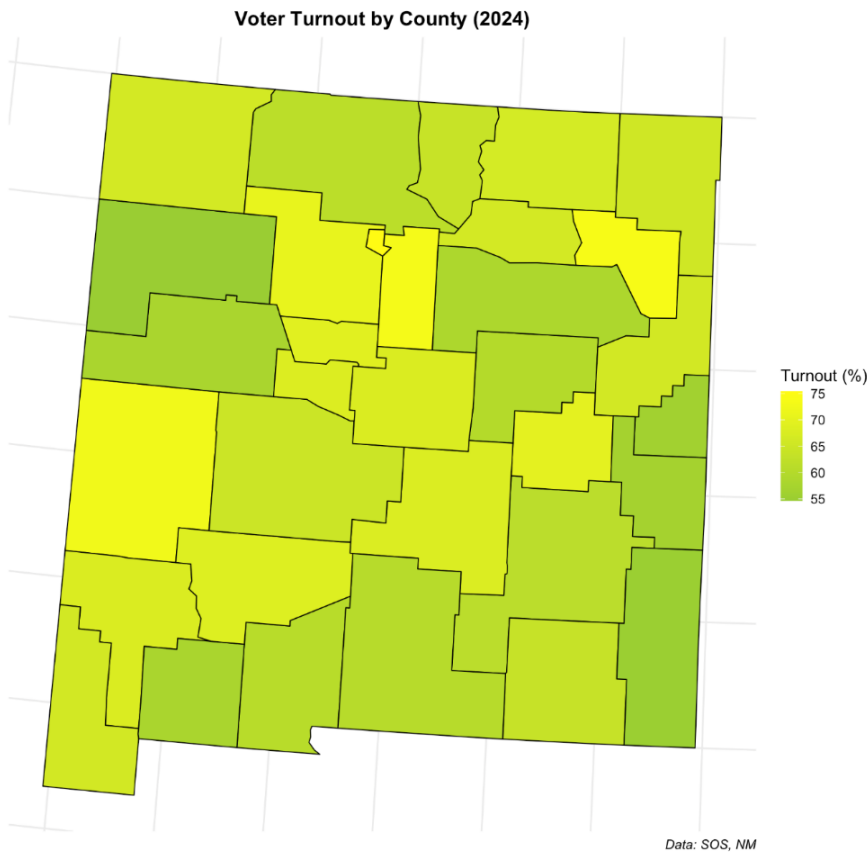


Figure 1.4 shows the turnout rate for New Mexico by county, using the number of registered as the denominator, with the lighter shade indicating higher levels of turnout. Counties with turnout

⁶ See <https://election.lab.ufl.edu/voter-turnout/> for more information on the VEP and voter participation rates across the US over time.

rates over 70% include Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Sandoval, Catron and Harding, with Los Alamos the highest at 75%. Lowest rates were in Lea and McKinley counties at 55%.

Figure 1.4 Turnout by County



1.3. Is NM Blue?

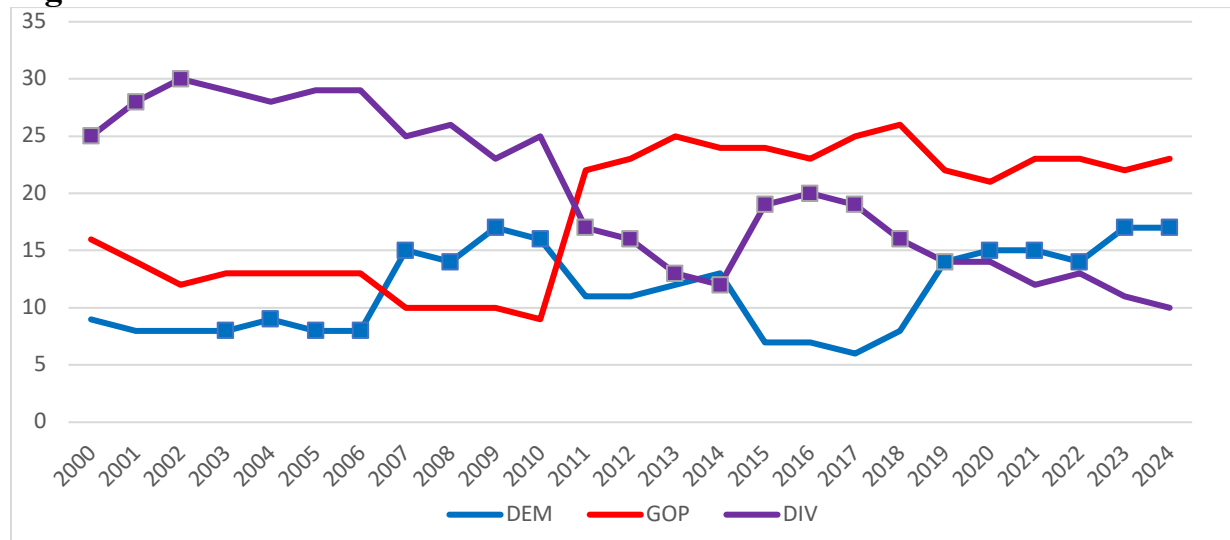
NM is a trifecta meaning that all the elected branches of government are held by the same party. As a result of the 2024 election cycle, the US has 38 (or 76%) trifecta states across the 50 states. For the 2024-2025 cycle in the US, there are 23 (46%) GOP trifectas, 15 (30%) Democratic trifectas, and 12 (24%) states with divided government as shown in Figure 1.5.⁷ GOP trifectas started to accelerate in 2011, with a total of 22 trifectas across the country. This has remained relatively steady with between 21 and 26 trifectas since 2011. Before 2011 the highest number of GOP state governments was 16 in 2001. Democratic trifectas reached a high of 17 in 2009, 2023, and 2024 with a low in 2017 of 6 trifectas. Divided state governments across the United States used to be much more common but started declining rapidly after 2010 as polarization between the parties increased.

The square dots in Figure 1.5. below show the years that NM was either a divided government or a Democratic trifecta. As the figure shows NM was divided in the early 2000s when Republican

⁷ See https://ballotpedia.org/Party_control_of_New_Mexico_state_government.

Gary Johnson was governor (1995-2003) and again when Republican Susanna Martinez was governor (2011-2018). During 2015-16 the NM House was also red, otherwise the NM House and Senate were blue during the time series. These data suggest NM is blue.

Figure 1.5. State Government Trifectas Nationwide 2000 to 2024*



*Square dots show the years that NM was either divided or a trifecta.

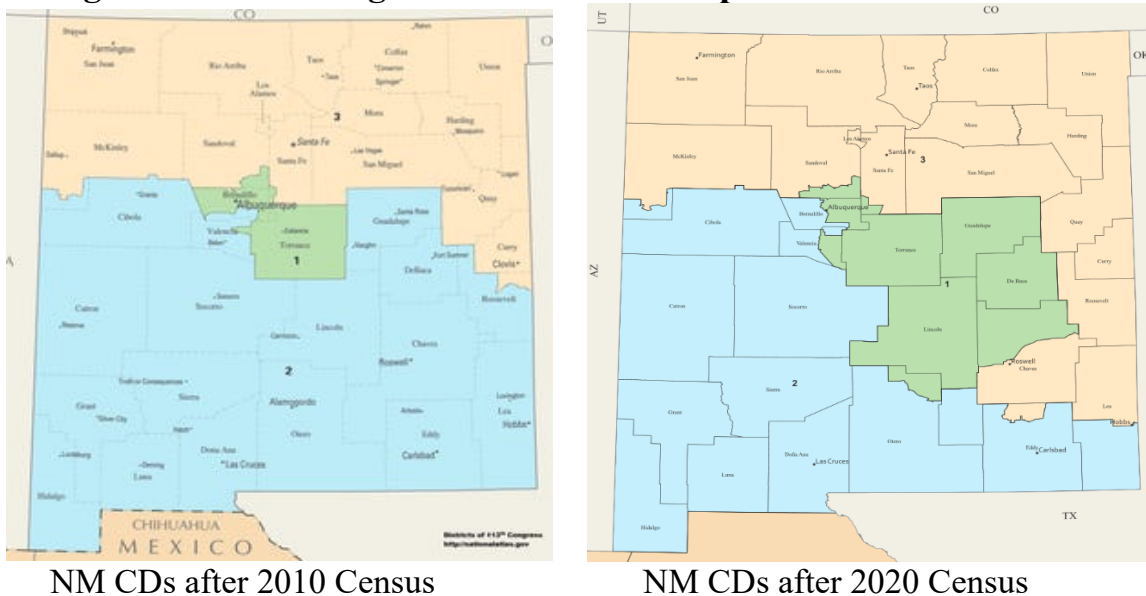
In addition, NM is a Democratic triplex with the governor’s office, secretary of state and attorney general all under Democratic control. In 2025 there are 23 (46%) Republican triplexes, 15 (30%). Democratic triplexes (all trifecta states are also triplexes), and 12 (24%) states (8 with Democratic governors, 4 with Republican governors) with divided governments.⁸ These data also suggest New Mexico is blue. State triplexes and trifectas have followed very similar trends at the national level.

The Democrats also won the redrawn seat in the 2nd Congressional District (CD2). In 2022 the Democratic candidate won by 0.7% with 50.3% of the vote and freshman incumbent Gabe Vasquez won it again in 2024 by 4.2% with 52% of the vote, making the NM’s federal delegation solidly blue (3 Democratic Congressmembers and 2 Democratic Senators). This change was the result of gerrymandering done after the 2020 census. The redrawing of the Congressional Districts is shown below in Figure 1.6. The redistricting was challenged in court by the NM Republican Party, but the change was upheld by the New Mexico State Supreme Court in late 2023 following a lower court decision. The court ruled that even though the new district lines diluted the vote of the party’s political opponents, and presumably therefore was partisan gerrymandering, it nevertheless fell short of a higher standard of ‘egregious’ gerrymandering.⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See Morgan Lee, 2023, “New Mexico Supreme Court upholds Democratic-drawn congressional map,” AP. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/redistricting-new-mexico-decision-congress-fl1e8f6d200d8226a9b581648db8809a1>, accessed August 8, 2025.

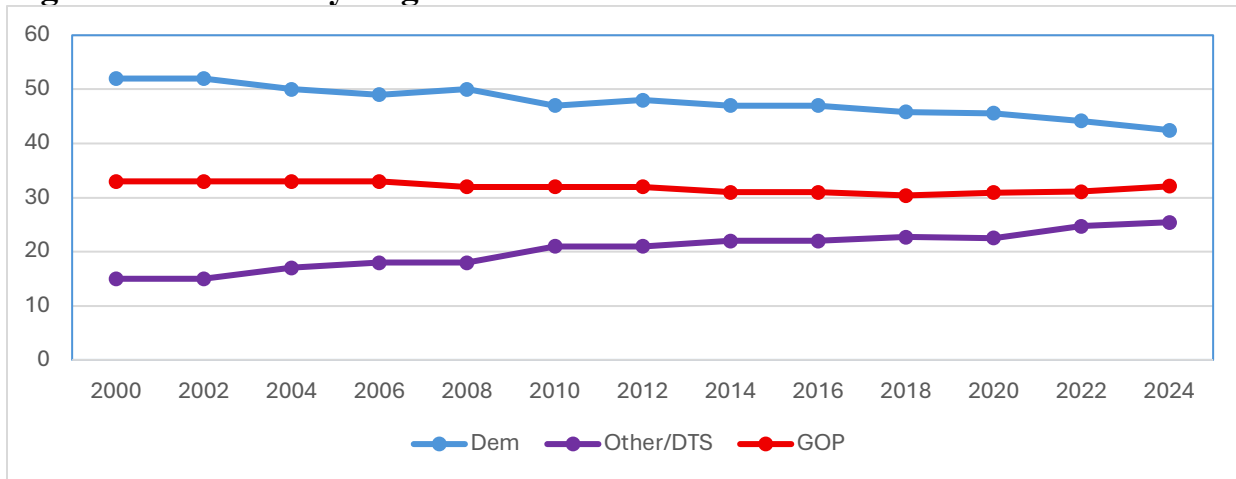
Figure 1.6. NM Congressional District Maps 2012-2020 versus 2022-2024



However, if we use partisanship as a tool to understand the state’s partisan flavor, we find in Figure 1.7 that over the last 2 decades the overall proportion of major party registrants has declined. For Democrats, that decline has been fairly steep, moving from 52% in 2000 to 42% by 2024. For Republicans registrants declined slowly between 2000 to 2018, but increased slightly since 2018. It is now at 32% only 1% lower than it was in 2000. The decrease in major party registrants has been offset by a steady increase in “decline to states” (DTS) and other non-major party registrations, which have increased from 15% of registered voters in 2000 to about 25% in 2024.¹⁰ This might suggest that New Mexico may be more competitive than other data suggests, and hence not deep blue. However, a look below at how registration compares to turnout suggests that the blue current running through New Mexico is very strong.

¹⁰ Throughout this report we combine Libertarian, Green, and other minor parties with DTS.

Figure 1.7. NM Party Registration 2000-2024



1.4 Registration versus Turnout

NM has been making its voter registration process easier since the 1990s. Today, NM is registering more voters through state agencies than ever before, especially through its recent, July 1, 2025, back-end adoption of an automatic voter registration (AVR) system that operates through the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD). Since 2019, New Mexico residents have had the opportunity to register to vote, update their registration, or designate their political party affiliation while applying for or updating their driver’s license, identification card, or updating their vehicle registration at the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD).¹¹ Under the New Mexico Voting Rights Act (HB4), signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in March 2023, any individual who is not registered to vote but is eligible to vote based on NM state law is automatically registered to vote when interacting with the MVD. After the voter’s automatic registration, they receive a notice in the mail from their county clerk providing them with information on what to do next. The only way to opt out of voter registration during a MVD visit is to declare that you are a noncitizen. Voters who want to opt out after being registered will receive mail from their county clerk with instructions on how to do so or they can find a form on the Secretary of State’s website, download it, and mail it in to their local county clerk or the Secretary of State’s office to deregister.¹²

These policy changes are increasing the number of registered voters, but it is not clear it is increasing turnout. We note that in 2020 we identified about 145,440 registered voters, representing about 12% of all registered voters in NM, who have never participated in any election. In 2022 that number grew to 208,933 voters, representing about 15% of the voters registered as of October 31, 2022. In 2024, that number increased again to 231,837 people who were registered by Election Day (November 5, 2024) but never participated in an election (midterm or presidential elections back to before 2012) representing about 17% of all registered

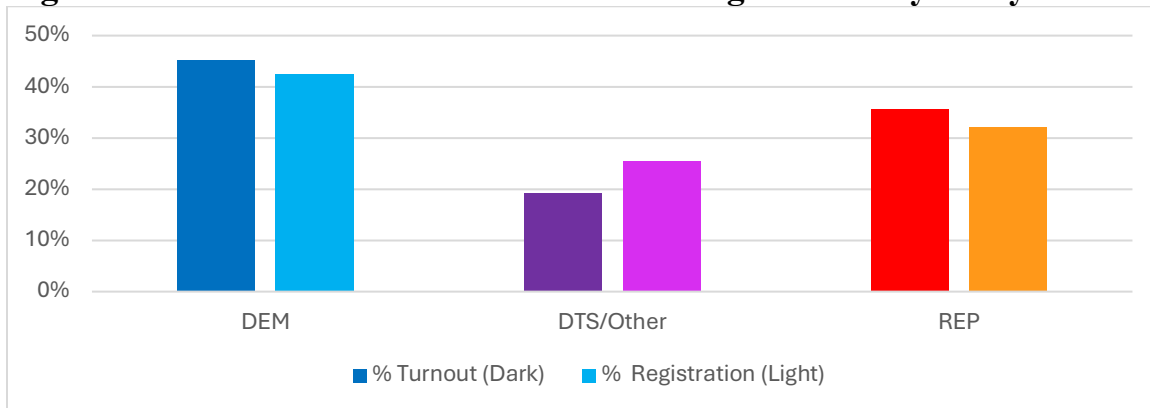
¹¹ https://www.abqjournal.com/news/article_6b0eeca1-e3e3-40c7-88a8-dababf73fcb0.html#:~:text=Jon%20Austria/Journal-

¹² <https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/ee3072ab0d43456cb15a51f7d82c77a2/2e979f18-7c7f-4c6f-84d2-08fe4b86c04e/Voter%20Registration%20Cancellation%20Form%20updated%20March%202025.pdf>

voters. Nearly half (48%) of these non-voters were not registered with either major party, with 44% DTS. So, while the number of registered voters in NM is increasing, so is the number and percentage of registered voters who have never voted and do not register with a major party.

One implication of a larger number of voters registering, but not participating, is that when we compare voters to registered voters, the breakdown of partisanship is very different with more partisans and fewer Independents. As Figure 1.8 shows, Democrats comprised 45% of voters but were only 42.5% of the voter file. Republicans accounted for 32% of the registered voters but represented 36% of all voters. Non major party voters and DTS are a substantially lower percentage of voters, at only 19%, but represent 25% of the voter registration file, a 6% difference. Lower voting rates among independent voters are due to the large increases we see in voters registering as DTS due, in part, to the implementation of automatic voter registration laws that register many less interested citizens who are not mobilized to vote. The newest policy implemented on July 1, 2025, moved NM to an even more onerous opt-out policy that will likely continue to expand the number of registered non-voters and the number of DTS voters. Therefore, it is likely these differences between registered voters and non-voters will continue to grow.

Figure 1.8. NM 2024 Percent Turnout and Registration by Party

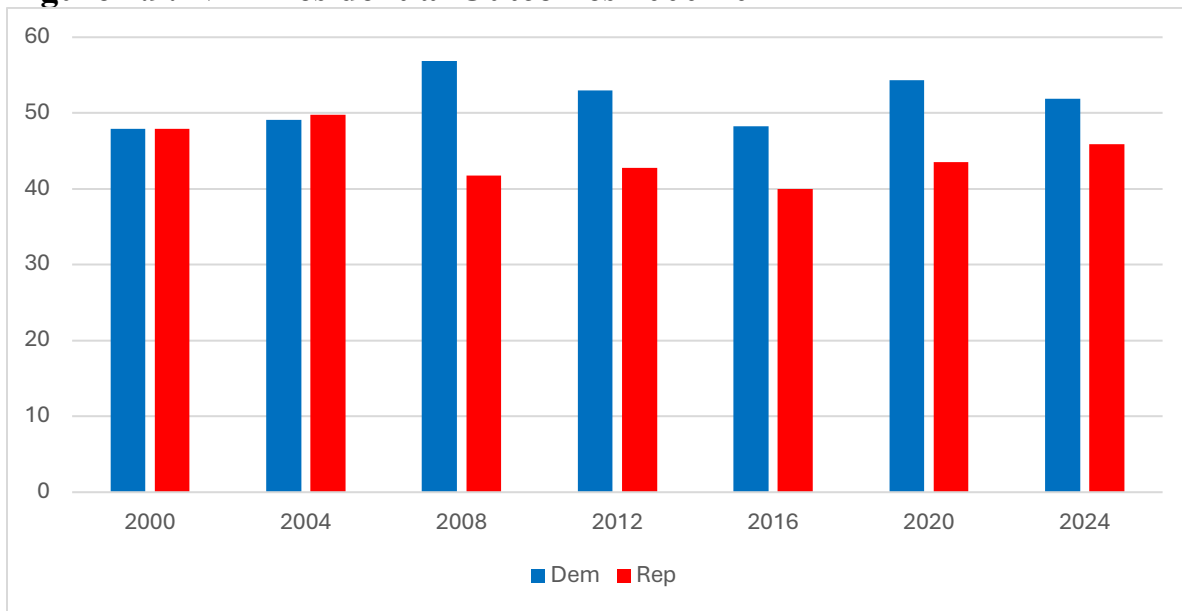


1.5. Campaigns and Voters 2024

Presidential Campaigns

While New Mexico is considered a blue state, the 2024 presidential race saw the closest presidential contest since 2004 as seen in Figure 1.9. Harris won the state with 51.9% of the vote compared to President Trump’s 45.9%, but the 2024 election was Trump’s strongest showing across the three elections, up from 40% in 2016 and 43.5% in 2020. The 2016 presidential contest in New Mexico was also significantly impacted by the presence of former Republican governor, Gary Johnson, the Libertarian Party candidate who received 9.3% of the vote in NM and 3.3% nationally, setting a Libertarian Party record. What explains the incremental statewide shift towards Donald Trump?

Figure 1.9. NM Presidential Outcomes 2000-2024



Source: https://www.270towin.com/states/new-mexico#google_vignette

Democrats may have treated New Mexico as a solid blue fly-over state, where no Democratic presidential candidate had ventured since 2012. On the other hand, Republican Donald Trump as candidate in 2016 and 2024 and as president in 2020 made four visits. In 2016, Trump made two visits, one in May 2016 to hold a rally at the Albuquerque Convention Center, and again in the final days of the campaign on October 30th inside a converted aircraft hangar near the Albuquerque Sunport. The May visit drew protests that turned violent, making national news.¹³ President Trump visited New Mexico during the 2020 campaign and held a rally in Rio Rancho. After losing the election to Joe Biden in 2020, candidate Trump returned to New Mexico in the final days of the 2024 campaign, holding a rally at CSI Aviation again near the Albuquerque Sunport.¹⁴

New Mexico is politically divided geographically between mostly rural and a few urban counties. Therefore, like other states, NM is sorted into political preferences by region. Americans have been sorting into more homogeneous political communities for nearly 4 decades.¹⁵ The effect of this is that Americans, including New Mexicans, are increasingly living in landslide counties, which are usually defined as counties where the difference between the Democratic and Republican presidential candidate is greater than +/- 20%.

Figure 1.10 below shows the difference in support between Harris and Trump by county. A positive number in blue indicates a Democratic victory; a dark blue bar represents a landslide (20% or more) county, and a light blue bar represents non-landslide counties (<20%).

¹³ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/protests-turn-violent-outside-trump-rally-in-new-mexico#:~:text=Politics%20May%2025%2C%202016%207,:%20%E2%80%9CStill%20wearing%20diapers.%E2%80%9D>

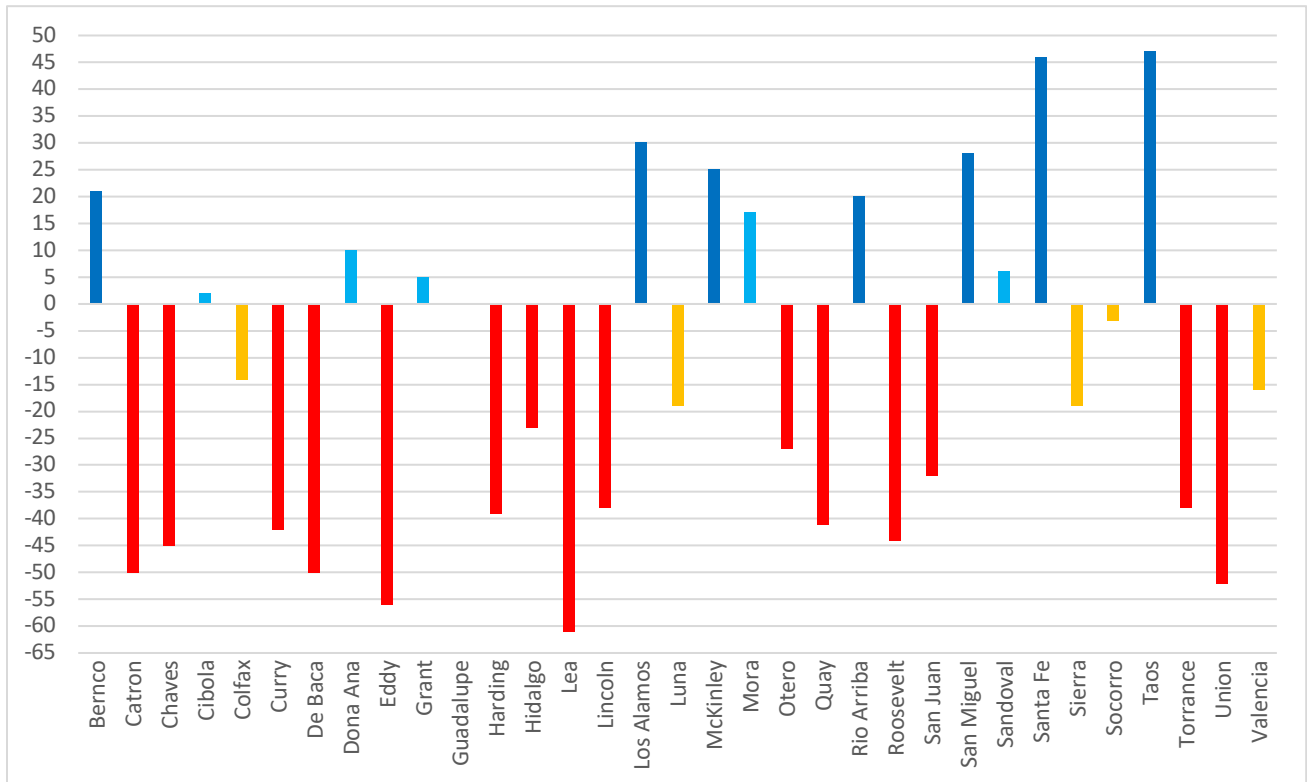
¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u--_YyPHTwM

¹⁵ Bill Bishop. 2008. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded American is Tearing Us Apart*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Conversely, negative numbers in red or orange represent GOP victories; red bars represent a GOP landslide county and orange bars represent GOP leaning, but non-landslide counties.

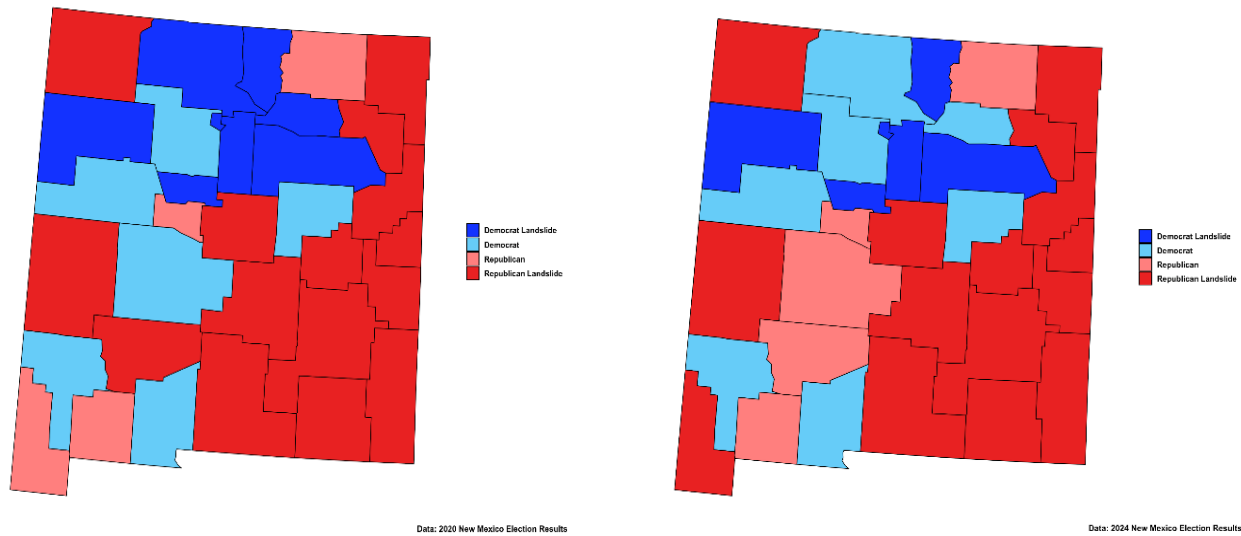
Seventy percent of NM counties are landslide counties, and about 73% of 2024 voters live in a landslide county, while 27% do not. Forty-nine percent of voters live in blue landslide counties, while 24% live in red landslide counties.

Figure 1.10. Sorting in NM Counties: Dem Presidential Support - GOP Presidential Support, 2024



Between 2016 and 2020, there was virtually no change in voting patterns at the county level apart from Guadalupe, which went from a landslide to a leaning Democratic County. But in 2024 we see more changes at the county level. In Figure 1.11 we see that Rio Arriba and Mora counties, which were landslide Democratic in 2020, were only leaning Democratic in 2024. Additionally, Socorro County which leaned Democratic in 2020, switched to leaning Republican in 2024. Sierra County, a Republican landslide in 2016 and 2020, was just below the landslide threshold in 2024. Finally, Hidalgo County switched from leaning Republican in 2016 and 2020 to a landslide Republican County in 2024.

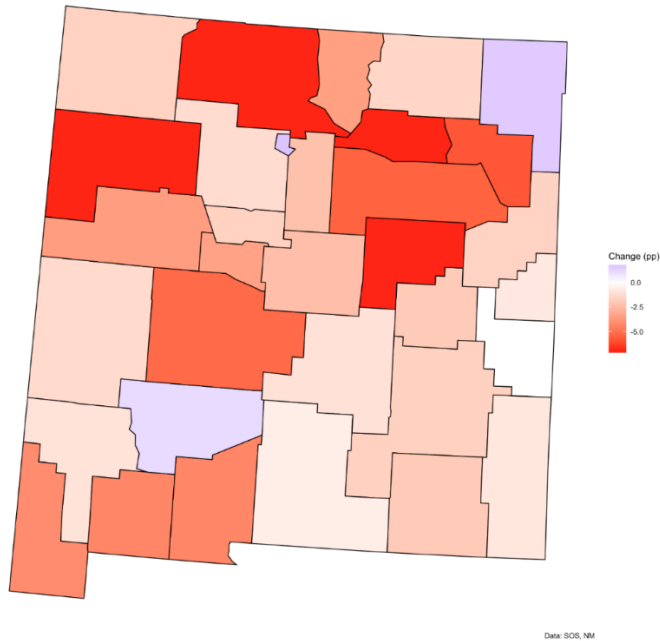
Figure 1.11. Presidential Support, Red and Blue Counties, 2020 and 2024



The movement towards the Republican Party in the presidential results can also be seen in Figure 1.12 below where we see that President Trump received more support in 29 of the 33 counties in 2024 compared to 2020, while he received less support in only three counties. The blue shaded counties show a shift towards the Democratic Party while the pink and red shaded counties are shifting towards the Republican Party, with white counties representing no change. Los Alamos, a landslide blue county, moved even closer to the Democratic Party in 2024. Union, a landslide Republican County and Sierra a Leaning Republican County, both show a small change towards the Democratic Party. The rest of the counties in NM show movement towards the Republican Party, except Roosevelt County, which shows no change from the previous presidential election. Counties which had the greatest swing towards the Republican Party between 2020 and 2024 include Rio Arriba, Mora, McKinley and Guadalupe. Rio Arriba, Mora and Guadalupe counties have among the largest majority Hispanic populations in the state, while McKinley is majority Native American. The Republican Party made in-roads into traditional Democratic territory. It will be interesting to see how the landscape changes after the Trump era.

Figure 1.12. Change in Presidential Vote share from 2020 to 2024

Vote Change 2020-2024



The growth in support for Trump can also be seen state-wide and at the Congressional District level by comparing the vote shares in the 2020 and 2024 elections. Table 1.1 shows the expected Presidential vote for the 2020 election state-wide and by Congressional District based on the redistricting that occurred after the 2020 Census and compares this to the Presidential vote in 2024. In the 2024 election, Democratic Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris performed worse than President Biden did in 2020 and in all three Congressional Districts. Statewide Harris obtained 51.9 percent of the state’s votes, compared to Biden’s 54.3%, 2.4% below Biden. Statewide, Harris outperformed Trump, 51.9% to 45.9%, only a +6.0 vote margin, compared to Biden’s +10.8. In NM CD2, which is a very competitive district, Trump beat Harris by a 2-point margin despite the redistricting that favored the Democratic Party, and a win by the freshman incumbent Democratic Representative Gabe Vasquez.

Table 1.1. Presidential Election Results by Congressional District

District	2024 Vote Shares		2020 Vote Shares based on New Districts ¹⁶	
	Harris	Trump	Biden	Trump
CD NM-01	55.1	42.4	55.9	41.5
CD NM-02	48.0	50.0	51.9	46.1
CD NM-03	51.5	46.3	54.4	43.6
Statewide	51.9	45.9	54.3	43.5

Source: The DownBallot, <https://www.the-downballot.com/p/the-downballots-calculations-of-presidential>; 2024 NM SOS

¹⁶ <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2022/9/7/2121191/-Daily-Kos-Elections-announces-publication-of-2020-presidential-results-for-new-House-districts>.

Federal Campaigns

In November 2024 at the Federal level, New Mexicans voted for the President, one US Senator, and a district Representative. For the Presidential and Senate elections in the state, both offices had the same amount of eligible registered voters as shown in Table 1.2. However, we found that more people voted in the presidential contest than in the senate contest, by approximately 35,000 votes. Thus, we can see substantial roll-off between the two state-wide offices. Also, Presidential candidate Donald Trump received a higher percentage of the vote than Republican US Senate candidate Nella Domenici who lost her seat by 10.2 points.

In CD2 Freshman Democrat Gabe Vasquez was ultimately victorious against Yvette Herrell who had previously held the seat before the 2020 legislative gerrymander. He won with about a 4% margin not quite enough yet to declare the seat a safe Democratic seat. The two other House contests were much less exciting and easy wins for the Democratic incumbents, both with close to 13-point margins, even though both were relatively new to their districts. Melanie Ann Stansbury defeated Republican Steve Jones easily with 56.4% of the vote. She had first won this district in 2020 in a special election after Congresswoman Deb Haaland resigned after her 58% victory to become Biden’s Secretary of the Interior. Similarly, the CD3 contest in the heavily Democratic northern portion of the state was an easy win for the Democratic incumbent, Teresa Leger Fernandez, against Republican candidate Sharon E. Clahchischillige with 56.3% of the vote.

Table 1.2. Federal Campaigns and Presidential Contest Election Outcomes 2024

Contest	Registered Voters	Actual Voters	% Vote D	% Vote R
President	1,406,111	938,290	51.9	45.9
CD1	503,842	342,749	56.4	43.6
CD2	436,696	265,322	52.1	47.9
CD3	465,573	288,427	56.3	43.7
Senate	1,406,111	903,311	55.1	44.9

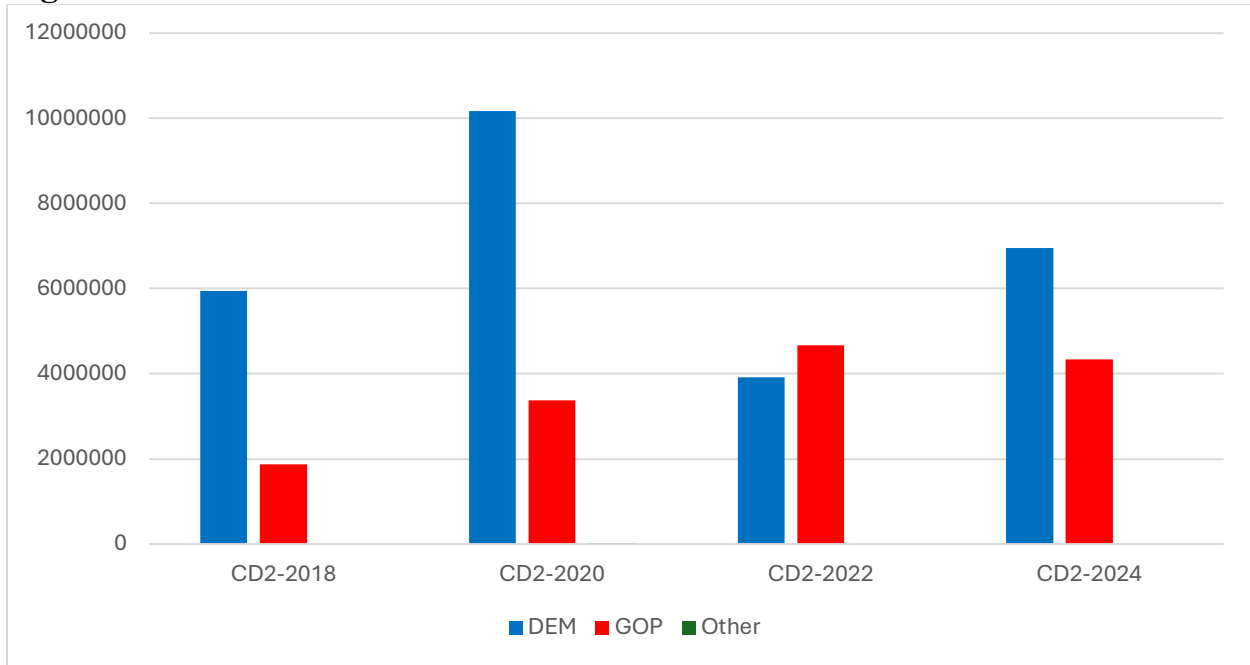
Campaign Spending in Federal Contests

US House

Campaign spending in US House contests has been dominated by the Democrats in CD1 and CD3, both Democratic strongholds. Democrats have consistently raised a significantly higher amount of money than their Republican competitors since 2018. In CD1, the Democratic candidate outraised the GOP opponent by \$1,872,859 in 2018, \$1,989,440 in 2020, \$3,119,327 in 2022, and \$1,126,252 in 2024. In CD3, the Democrat candidate outraised their GOP opponent by \$2,149,291 in 2020, \$2,809,916 in 2022, and \$2,020,631 in 2024. OpenSecrets did not have campaign contribution disclosure for the Republican Candidate in 2018, but the Democratic candidate raised a total of \$1,949,818, and the Libertarian candidate raised \$7,957.

CD2 on the other hand has been more competitive. Figure 1.13 shows the contributions raised in CD2 across four election cycles. Because of the competitiveness of CD2, campaign spending has been much higher by both parties. Still Democrats outspent Republicans in every year but 2022.

Figure 1.13. NM CD2 Candidates Contributions Raised 2018-2024



Source: Opensecrets.org. Adjusted for inflation using 2024 dollars.

The continued closeness of the CD2 contest was surprising given the more Democratic character of the newly formed CD2 that resulted from redistricting (see Figure 1.6). CD2 party registration for both the Democratic and Republican Parties was at 38% in 2020 before redistricting. After redistricting, Democratic Party registration was 43% in 2022 and remained high at 41% in 2024, while Republican Registration was 31% in 2022 and remained low at 32% in 2024. The 2024 contest featured former CD2 House Representative Republican Yvette Herrell in her fourth consecutive contest as seen in Table 1.3. Herrell first ran for the seat under the previous geographic configuration in 2018 when GOP Representative Steve Pearce resigned to run in the state governor’s contest, but she was defeated by Democratic newcomer Xochitl Torres Small in a very close race with less than 4,000 votes between the winner and loser (Democratic candidate 101,489 (50.9) to GOP candidate 97,767 (49.1)).¹⁷ In 2018, under virtual parity in the two-party registrations, Herrell vowed to return and win in 2020 which she did by a whopping +8 (54% to 46%; 142,283 to 122, 546).¹⁸

¹⁷ See Atkeson, Lonna Rae and Wendy L. Hansen. 2020. “2018 NM Election Administration, Security, and Election Reform Report,” Typescript, University of New Mexico.

¹⁸ Atkeson, Lonna Rae and Wendy L. Hansen, 2022. “2020 NM Election Administration, Security, and Election Reform Report, Typescript, University of New Mexico. Available at: <https://www.sos.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2020-UNM-Voter-Report.pdf>.

Table 1.3. CD 2 Race Outcome Since 2018

	2018	2020	2022	2024
Rep. Yvette Herrell	49.1%	53.7%	49.6%	47.9%
Dem Candidate	50.9%	46.3%	50.3%	52.1%
Vote Difference (%)	3,722 (1.8%)	19,737 (7.4%)	1,350 (0.7%)	11,032 (4.2%)
Winner	Torres Small (D)	Herrell (R)	Vasquez (D)	Vasquez (D)

Before the next election, CD2 was redrawn, diluting the power of the Republican party in the district. In the newly redesigned district in 2022 Herrell had a numerical uphill battle but a spending advantage unlike her runs in 2018 and 2020 as shown in Figure 1.12. In the 2022 election, the incumbent Yvette Herrell outraised the Democratic candidate by over \$700,000, or 19%. NM CD2 was one of the more expensive House elections in the country, ranked 24th highest overall in outside spending among 365 House contests, with incumbent Yvette Herrell ranking 74th out of 433 entries in candidate raised funds and 29th among Republican candidates (opensecrets.org). Despite outspending her opponent, under the redrawn district Herrell lost to Vasquez by a narrow margin of 0.7%.

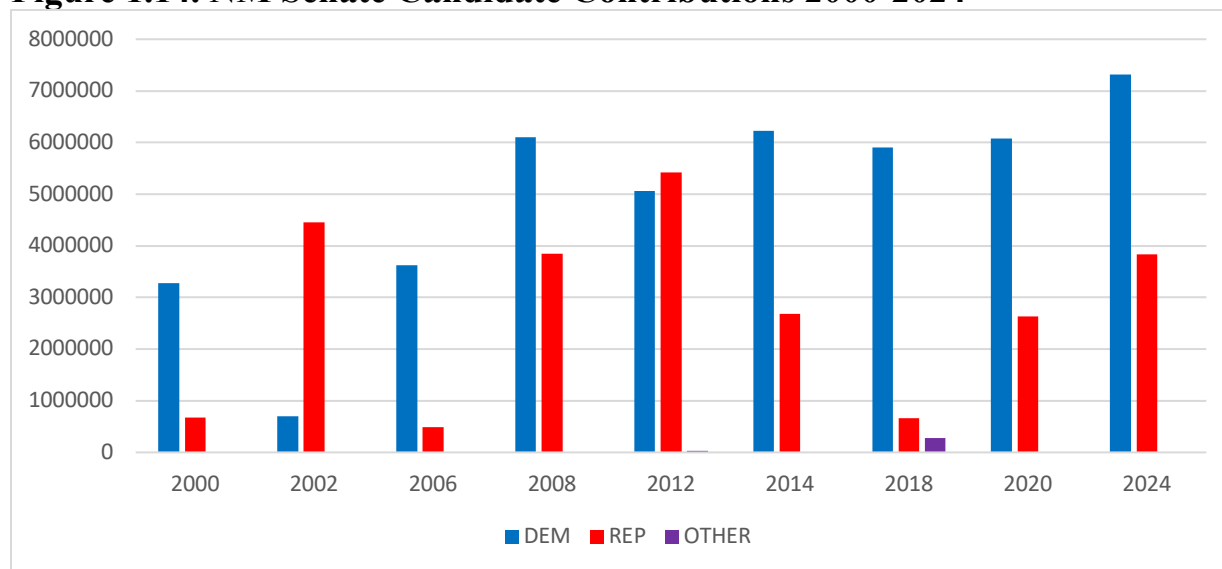
In 2024, Herrell and Vasquez faced off again, in another very expensive race. Vasquez raised almost \$3 million more than his Republican opponent. The race was still close, but a larger gap than in 2022, with Vasquez winning by +4.2% of the vote, or just over 11,000 votes in the district.

This district highlights the changing nature of Democratic and Republican support with more urban and educated “city” voters leaning largely Democratic and rural, and working-class voters, increasingly supporting Republicans. CD2 has a relatively large population urban area, with Las Cruces and parts of Albuquerque included within it. The majority of CD2 by land mass is rural towns.

US Senate

In 2024, one of NM’s two Senate seats was up for election. The state saw a face-off between Democrat Incumbent Martin Heinrich and Republican competitor Nella Domenici. Nella Domenici is the daughter of former NM Senator Pete Domenici a six-term (1973-2009) popular GOP Senator. Nevertheless, incumbent Heinrich won his seat by a comfortable margin of 10.2 points. Figure 1.14 shows Senate race campaign contributions for both New Mexico Senate seats since 2000 in 2024 dollars. Since 2000 Democrats have significantly outraised Republicans, except for 2002 and slightly in 2012. In the 2024 election, Heinrich more than doubled his campaign contributions setting a statewide record of contributions since 2000. GOP contributions have lagged far behind Democrats in the state, except for the 2012 election where the Republican candidate outraised the Democratic candidate but ultimately the Democrats took the seat.

Figure 1.14. NM Senate Candidate Contributions 2000-2024



Source: OpenSecrets.org, adjusted for inflation to 2024 dollars.

1.6. Voting Mode

COVID-19 was the defining feature of the 2020 election and affected every aspect of it. Election administrators worked hard to process absentee ballot requests and create a safe election space for in-person voting. Absentee voters, who normally made up about 10% of all voters, before COVID more than tripled to over one-third (35%) of voters in 2020 (see Figures 1.15 and 1.16). Early voting, which had been increasing in presidential years declined to 49% from 57% in 2020, while Election Day voters plummeted to only 16% from 37%.

In 2022, absentee voting plummeted from its pandemic highs to 13%, slightly above its pre-2020 levels, and basically remained there in 2024. Early voting has continued to rise in popularity in every presidential election year since 2000 except 2020 where it declined because of COVID. In 2024 early in-person voting reached an all-time high with three in five (60%) New Mexican voters choosing this method. Election Day voting recovered from its 2020 low of 16% at 27%. New Mexican voters appear to increasingly favor in-person early voting.

All voters, regardless of party registration, favored early voting in 2024, as shown in Figure 1.16, but there were partisan differences. While almost three in five (58%) Democrats chose to vote early, almost two-thirds (66%) of Republicans, and only just over half (53%) of independent voters did. Vote by mail (VBM) was the least popular voting method across all voters, but of those who used VBM, Republicans voted by mail the least (8%), Democrats voted by mail the most (17%), and independents were in-between (12%). The figure also shows a continuing decline in VBM from its high levels during COVID, and a continuing preference for voting in-person, especially among Republicans. As for Election Day voting, those registered as “DTS” made up the highest percent of the voting block on Election Day voting (35%), followed by equal percentages of Democrat and Republicans (25%).

Figure 1.15. NM Voting Mode by Election Year

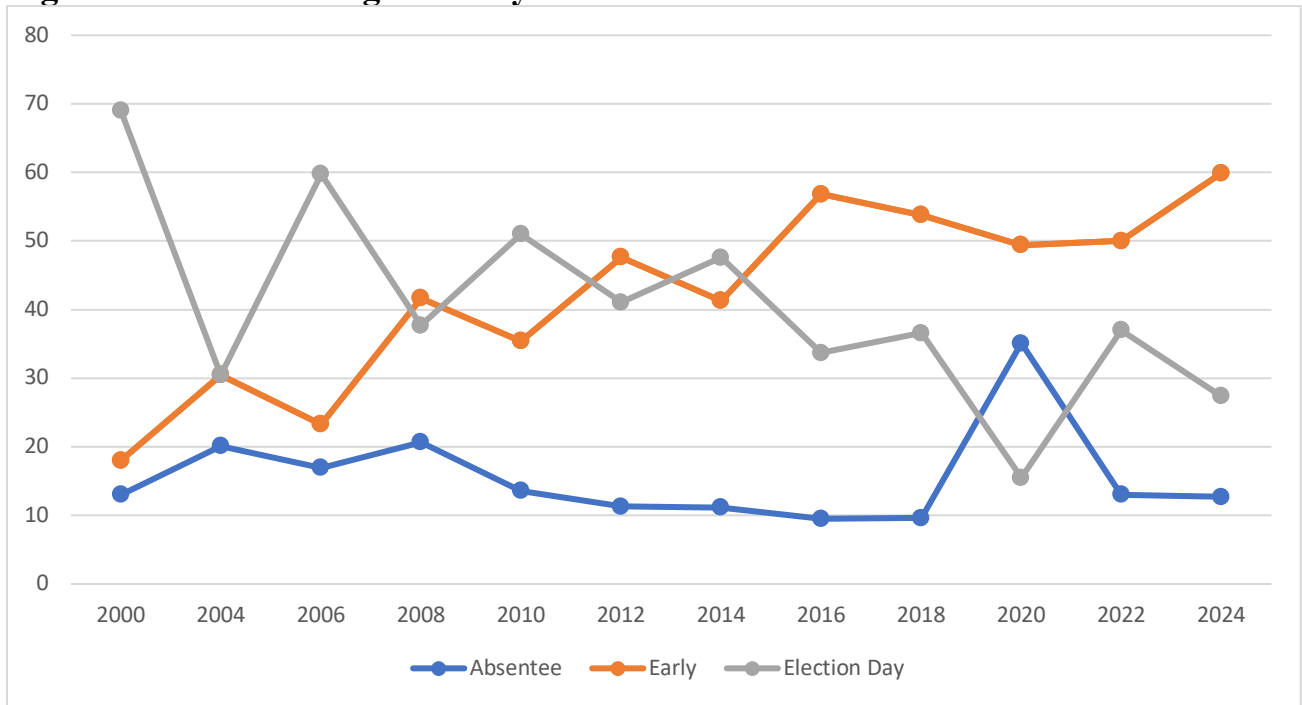
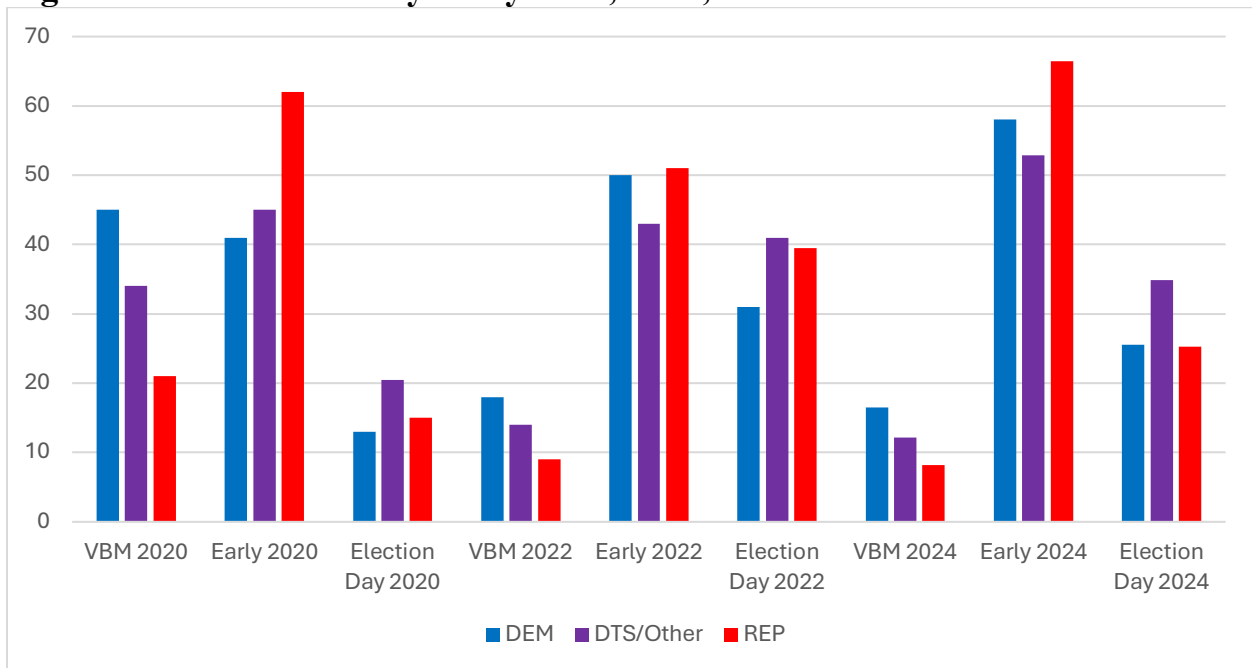


Figure 1.16. Vote Mode by Party 2020, 2022, and 2024

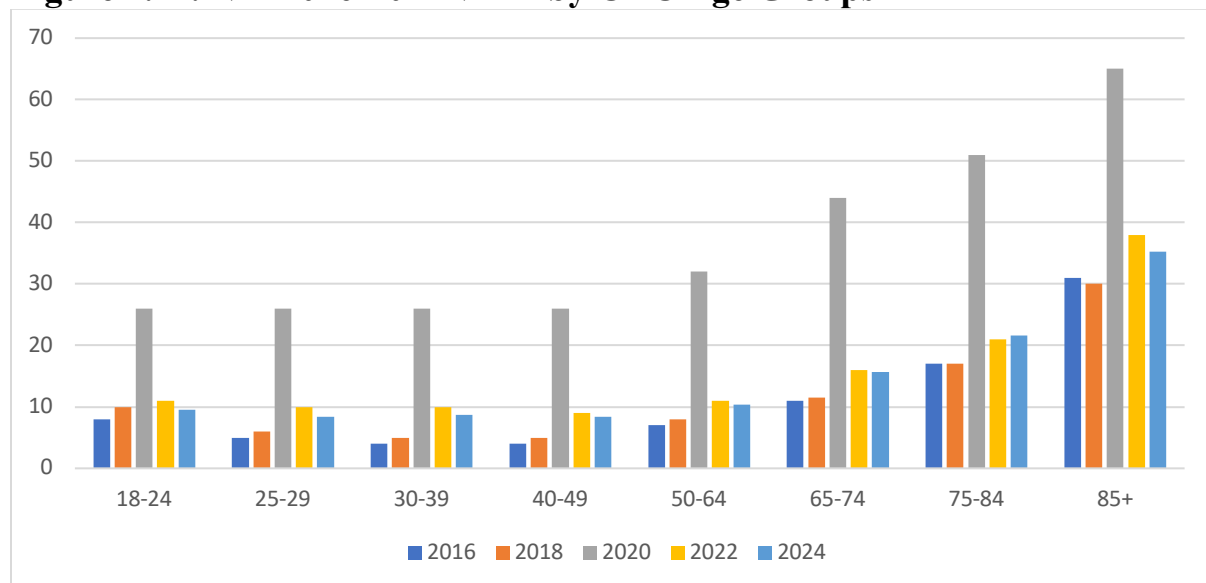


Vote By Mail

Effective January 1, 2024, the state passed the Voluntary Permanent Absentee Voter List (Section 1-6-3.1 NMSA 1978). Voters who opt to be on this list will automatically get mailed ballots for each Statewide election that includes their district/precinct. Voters in the Voluntary Permanent Absentee Voter list are to receive notice at least 49 days before getting their ballot, with additional instruction on how to remove themselves from the list. This change will likely have the effect of increasing VBM turnout over time. In addition, each of the 33 county clerks in the state is required to provide at least two monitored and secured ballot drop boxes (though county clerks can request an exemption). The law also allows for secure ballot drop boxes to be placed on tribal lands and permits family members or service providers to return ballots for those living in tribal communities.

Figure 1.17 shows the relationship between age and vote mode from 2016-2024, providing insight on how COVID impacted whether a voter chose to VBM, in-person early, or in-person Election Day in 2020, which carried over marginally to the 2022 and 2024 elections. If we ignore 2020, the graph shows that VBM usage across all age groups slightly increased from 2016 and 2018 levels for people age 25-years-old and older. In 2024 we can see that VBM for the 18-24 decreased from 2022 and has returned to pre-COVID VBM percentage. Thus, the large VBM usage in 2020 appears to have impacted some voters who likely continued the practice into 2024. Throughout all age categories, NM voters who chose to use VBM slightly decreased from 2022 to 2024, showing a slight favorability for voters across the board to vote in-person. The graph also shows that increasing age is always a strong predictor of voting-by-mail and monotonically increases with each age group, but the magnitude of the slope is much greater in 2020.

Figure 1.17. NM 2016-2024 VBM by CDC Age Groups



1.7. Same Day Registration

History of Same Day Registration

Same Day Registration (SDR) was first signed into law in 2019 by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham through Senate Bill 672. The bill first supported SDR in statewide elections only for early voting at the county clerks' offices (and/or designated alternate voting location). SDR implementation allowed eligible state residents the option to register and vote on the same day during early voting by providing a valid form of identification. Election Day same day registration was phased in for the 2022 election such that voters could use same day registration for the first time in statewide elections on Election Day at Election Day voting centers.

In the 2020 general election, 11,449 voters used SDR to register to vote or change their address. According to Common Cause, over 10,000 people used SDR in the 2022 primary election.¹⁹ In the 2022 general election SDR was used by 20,507 people, with 10,694 of those using it on Election Day.²⁰ In 2023, when many city elections take place across the states, 4,582 people used SDR, according to Source New Mexico.²¹ Starting with the 2024 primary contest, SDR expanded throughout the state for both early and Election Day voting, allowing those not registered with a major party to change their party affiliation and vote in the primary. In the 2024 general election, SDR was used across the state by nearly 49,000 people with about 23,000 using SDR on Election Day.

Figure 1.18 shows the percentage who used SDR by party registration for early and Election Day voting in 2024. During both early voting, which ran from October 8th to November 2nd, and Election Day voting those using SDR were more likely to register as Republicans. About 42% of SDR voters registered as Republican for both early and Election Day, compared to 35% early and 30% Election Day for Democrats and 23% and 28%, respectively, as DTS or other party registrants.

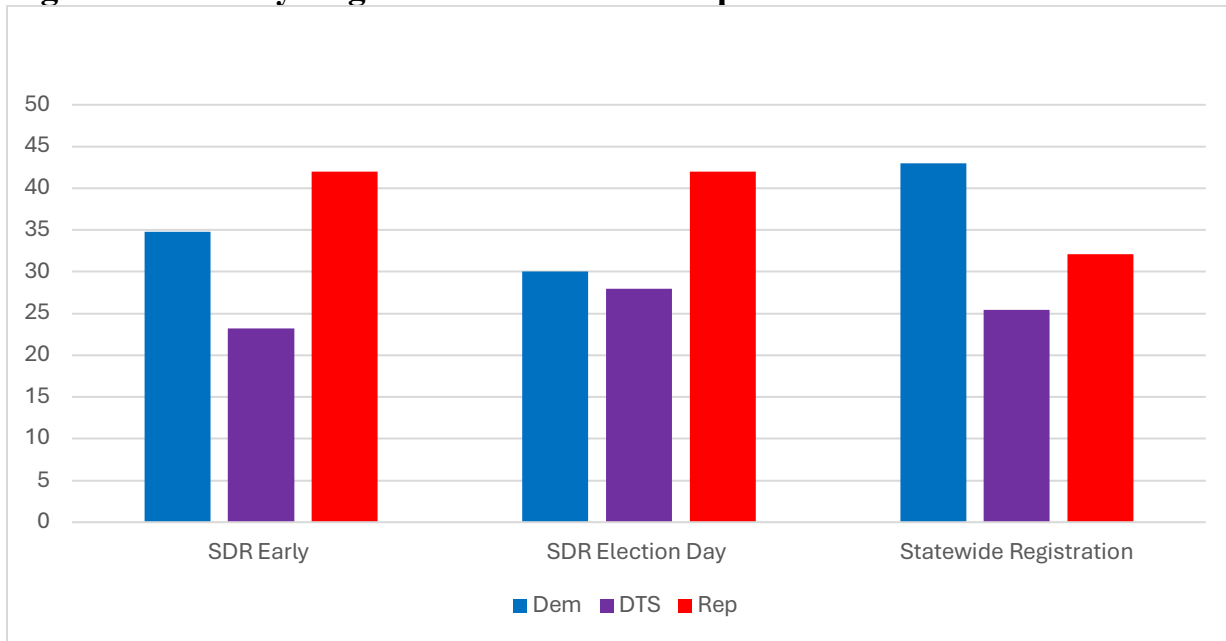
Registration patterns for SDR were different from what we see among registered voters statewide, shown in the last 3 columns of Figure 1.18. While more Democrats were registered statewide, Republicans were more likely to use SDR both during early and on Election Day than Democrats.

¹⁹ <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/elections/who-counts/new-mexico-makes-it-easier-to-register-to-vote/>

²⁰ Source NM. November 9, 2022. <https://sourcenm.com/briefs/2022-saw-more-n-m-registered-voters-more-same-day-registrants/>

²¹ Source NM. November 9, 2023. <https://sourcenm.com/tag/same-day-voter-registration/>

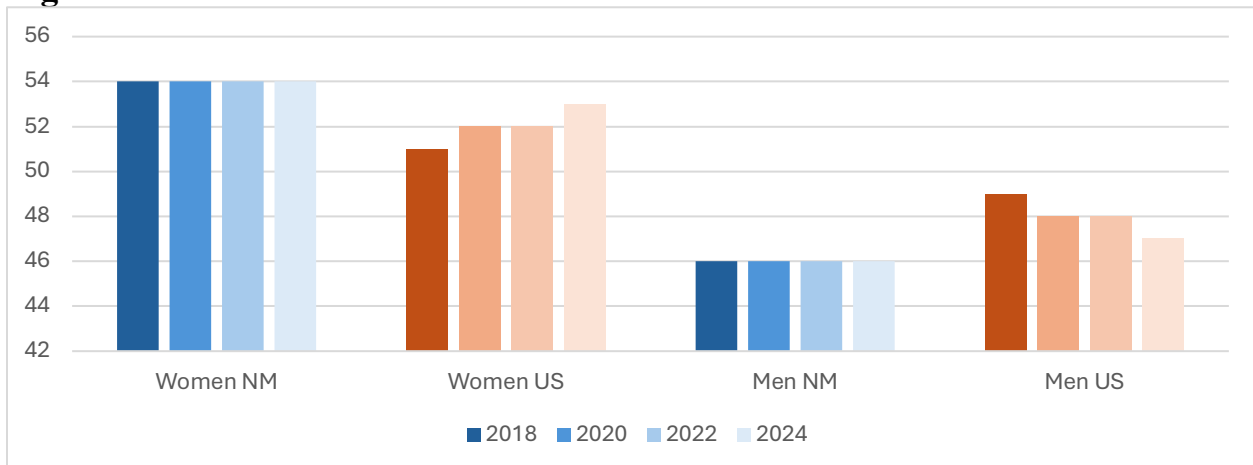
Figure 1.18. Party Registration for SDR compared to Statewide 2024



1.8. Demographics of Voters

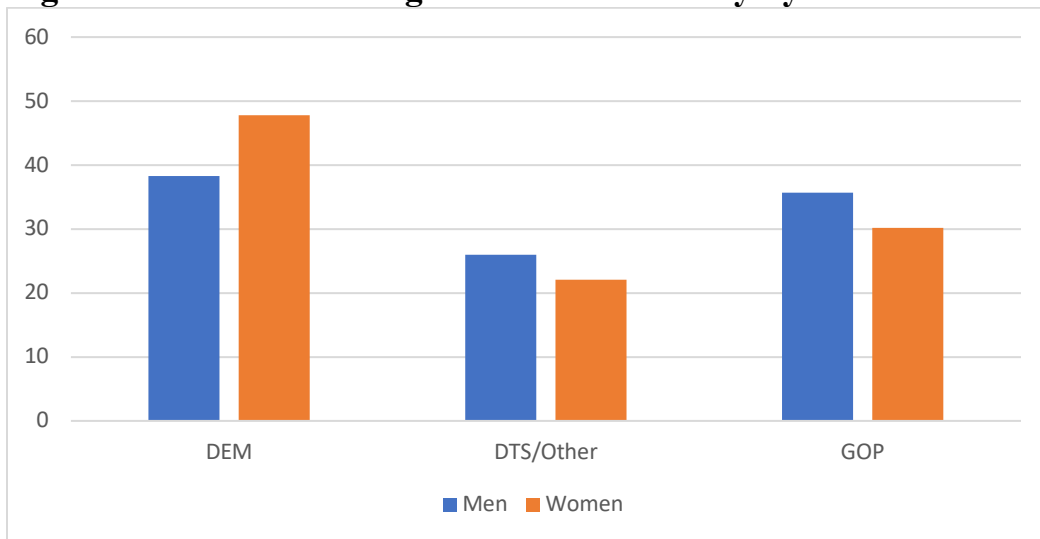
In NM, women make up the majority of voters. In every election year since 2018 women made up 54% of voters while men were only 46%. This represents a discrepancy from the voter registration file, as women make up 53%, and men make-up 47% of registered voters. National data suggests NM’s gender imbalance is in the same direction as national trends, but the gap is slightly larger in NM. Figure 1.19 shows the gender demographic makeup of voters from 2018 to 2024 in New Mexico and nationwide. In both the 2018 and 2022 midterms, and well as the 2020 and 2024 general election, gender demographics have remained consistent with women making up 54% and men making up 46% in New Mexico, while nationally, the gender gap has grown from 2% (51% women, 49% men) in 2018 to 6% (53% women, 47% men) in 2024.

Figure 1.19. NM and US Gender & Turnout 2018 to 2024



As seen in Figure 1.20, women are also far more likely to belong to the Democratic Party than men; 48% of women and 38% of men identify as Democrats (10-point difference), while 30% of women and 36% of men identify as Republicans (6-point difference). Twenty-six percent of men identify as DTS, compared to 22% of women. The pattern is similar to national data, which show that women are 12 points more likely than men to identify as Democrats and men are 12 points more likely than women to be affiliated with the Republican Party.²²

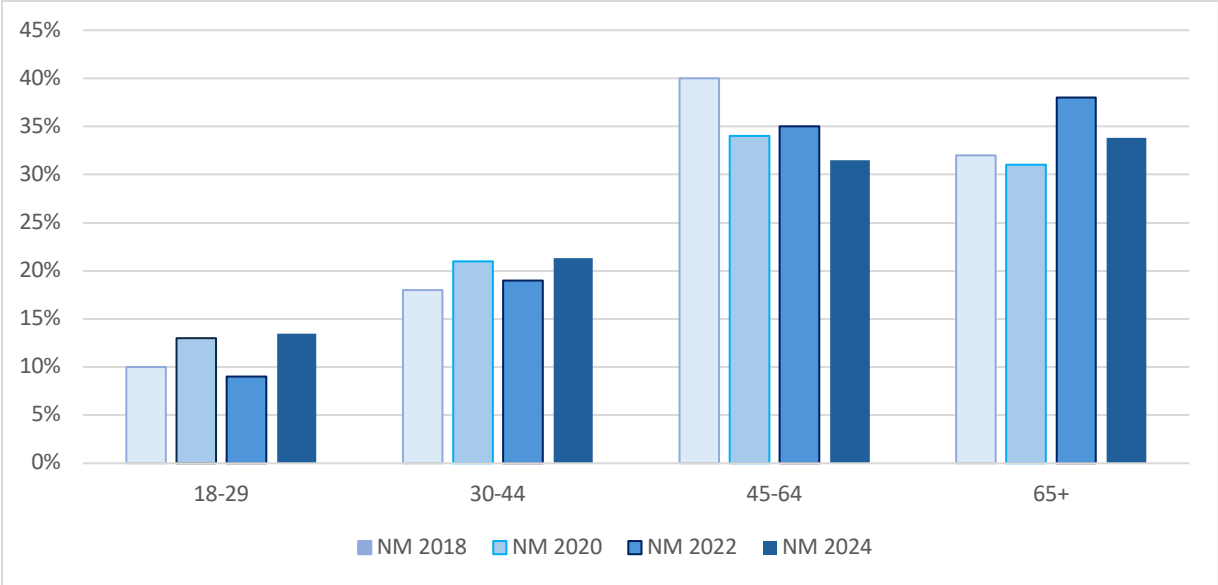
Figure 1.20. 2024 NM Registered Voters: Party by Gender



In terms of age, 2024 saw a similar turnout of younger voters compared to 2020 (Figure 1.21). Those aged 18-29 made up 13.5% of voters, a 0.5-point increase from 2020. Those from 30-44 also slightly increased, but only 0.3-points from 21% to 21.3%. Both of these younger demographics saw a smaller voter turnout for the midterm elections in 2018 and 2022. Voters aged 45-64 years old made up 34% in 2020, falling to 31.5% in 2024, while those 65 and over saw the largest increase from 31% in 2020 to 33.8% in 2024.

²²See Pew Research Center, July 2025. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/fact-sheet/party-affiliation-fact-sheet-npors/>

Figure 1.21. NM 2018, 2020, 2022, & 2024 Turnout by Age



Chapter 2. Voter Experiences with the Voting Process and Voter Confidence

The voter experience is a key lens to understanding and exploring the election ecosystem. It provides evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of election administration procedures and processes. The voter experience can influence voter confidence in the voting process and provide evidence to help to determine the quality of the election experience. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of voters' experiences at the polls or with vote-by-mail (VBM) and with their ballot and use their experiences to inform and improve future elections.

Chapter 2 and 3 analyze responses to a 2024 postelection survey of New Mexico voters. Our sample consisted of 5,408 respondents. For more information about the methodology see Appendix A. For a report on the frequencies for each survey question see Appendix B.

In 2024, NM voters could vote in-person from October 8 through Election Day, November 5. Voters could request and vote a mail ballot or vote in-person at any vote center in their county, Monday through Saturday, through Election Day.

This chapter has the following four sections:

- Section 2.1 examines the voter experience for vote-by-mail (VBM) voters.
- Section 2.2 discusses in-person voter experiences.
- Section 2.3 discusses voter identification practices.
- Section 2.4 examines voter confidence at multiple levels of election administration, including the voter's ballot at their vote center, the ballots in the county, the state, and the nation.

2.1. Vote-by-mail (VBM)

In 2024 VBM voters comprised about 13% (118,007) of the voters. Over eight in ten (83%) of these voters said they voted by mail in a previous election and 47% of them indicated they were on the permanent absentee vote by mail list to automatically be sent an absentee ballot for each future statewide election for which they are eligible. Thus, the new permanent vote by mail list is growing rapidly. About one-third (32%) of these voters indicated they were unaware of the opportunity to be on a permanent list. Given the new policy, **we recommend that either the county clerks or the Secretary of State send out an email or postal notice to at least previous VBM voters, or perhaps all voters, about the new program and how to take advantage of it.**

We asked voters to indicate why they chose VBM. Two thirds of voters (66%) cited convenience as the reason for voting by mail, while a little over one in six (15%) indicated a physical disability, one in seven (14%) were out of town, one in ten (10%) could not get to the poll on Election Day because of their work or school schedule, one in twenty (5%) were a domestic or overseas uniform voter or non-uniform overseas voter, about one in ten had other obligations on

Election Day (11%). Those trends are similar to what we have seen in previous surveys, except in 2020 when COVID-19 was the most popular reason for voting by-mail.

VBM voters have the opportunity to take more time with their ballots and look up information on key races before they make their voting decisions. VBM voters also have the opportunity to engage with others while they vote. We asked voters, “Did you fill out your ballot with anyone else, such as a family member or friend, or did you complete your ballot alone.” We found that over eight in ten voters (85%) completed their ballot alone, while 15% completed their ballot with someone else. Of those who completed their ballots with others seven in ten (71%) did so with their spouse or partner, a little more than one in ten (12%) with their parent or parents, or about one in twenty (6%) with their children, and over one in six (16%) with other family members, less than one in ten (7%) completed the ballot with a friend.

Returning VBM Ballots

In New Mexico vote-by-mail ballots must be returned by 7pm on Election Day when the polls close and voters can return their VBM ballot in multiple ways. Voters can return completed VBM ballots by USPS, or by dropping them off at the county clerk's office, a vote center, or a designated drop box. Most voters who dropped off their ballots reported that it was very (85%) or fairly easy (14%) to find a drop-off location. If the voter cannot drop off or deliver the ballot themselves, it must be delivered by either a care-giver or an immediate family member, including a spouse, a parent, a child or a sibling and they must sign the outside official return envelope.²³ To ascertain the popularity of these methods, we asked, “How did you return your ballot?” Table 2.1 displays the results.

- Three out of five of voters (63%) used the USPS in some way. 30% of voters dropped their ballot off at a USPS location, while 25% had a postal worker pick it up at their home.
- About 8% of voters reported dropping their ballot off at a post office box not located at a USPS post office, 11% used a ballot drop box, 11% used an Early Voting Convenience Center, 6% dropped it at the County Clerk’s office during early voting, and 4% dropped it off at the County Clerk’s office or a vote center on Election Day.
- 2% reported emailing their ballot, but these voters are uniform or overseas voters.

Table 2.1. How did you return your VBM?

At a post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	30%
It was picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	25%
A drop box used only for ballots	11%
I dropped it off at an early voting center	11%
At an official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	8%
I dropped it off at the County Clerk's office during early voting	6%
I dropped it off on Election Day at a vote center or the County Clerk's office	4%
Other (mail room, community mail box, work mail box, etc.)	3%

²³ See NMSA section 1-6-9.4a.

I emailed my ballot	2%
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In recent elections in New Mexico, many voters decided to drop off their mail ballots at official locations rather than returning them through the postal system. VBM return methods indicate broader trends in voting behavior, which is eventually shaped by concerns over mail delays, convenience and trust in ballot handling. Understanding why voters make choices provides important insight into electoral engagement, so we asked a question to voters, “Why did you decide to drop off your ballot rather than mail the ballot back in?” (See Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. “Why did you decide to drop off your ballot rather than mail the ballot back in?” Please mark all that apply

I wanted to be certain that it arrived	62%
It was very convenient to drop off	39%
I did not trust the USPS to deliver it on time	32%
I did not have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	7%

The data suggest that voter behavior around ballot drop-off in New Mexico is principally determined by trust and assurance, rather than convenience alone—62% of voters wanting to be certain that their ballot arrived underscores voters’ strong concern for ballot security, though this is down from 2020 when 77% expressed this concern. While 39% of the voters felt dropping off the ballot was convenient for them, 32% indicated distrust in the US Postal Service’s ability to deliver ballots on time, similar to 2020 when 38% cited convenience and 33% didn’t trust the USPS. These concerns highlight lingering doubts about mail efficiency or potential delays. A smaller portion (7%) mentioned lack of time for mail delivery.

We also see a party difference in voter trust. Table 2.3 highlights differences in trust by party. The most frequently cited reason for dropping off their ballots by both Democrats (59%) and Republicans (70%) was a concern that their ballots arrive on time. Democrats cited convenience (45%) and not trusting the USPS (35%) more frequently than Republicans (25% and 35% respectively). Republicans (13%) were also more likely to cite not having enough time for delivery than Democrats (3%). Given more rural voters are Republican, these differences might relate to geography. Table 2.4 shows the same reason breakdown as Table 2.3 except by geography. Rural voters cite more concern about arriving on time while urban and suburban voters are more concerned with convenience.

Table 2.3. Reason for ballot drop off by party. Mark all that apply

	Democrat	Republican	Independents
I wanted to be certain that it arrived	59%	70%	69%
It was very convenient to drop off	45%	35%	21%
I didn’t trust USPS to deliver it on time	35%	25%	23%
I did not have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	3%	13%	17%

Table 2.4. Reason for ballot drop off by where voters live. Mark all that apply

	City	Suburban Area	Rural
I wanted to be certain that it arrived	57%	62%	71%
It was very convenient to drop off	41%	51%	30%
I didn't trust USPS to deliver it on time	39%	20%	31%
I did not have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	9%	5%	5%

We also asked when voters returned their ballots. Table 2.5 shows 4% returned their ballots sometime in September, 28% in the first two weeks of October. The majority, 47%, returned their ballots during the last two weeks of October. Only 5% of VBM voters returned their ballots on Election Day and another 16% a few days before Election Day.

Table 2.5. When did you return your mail ballot?²⁴

Sometime in September	4%
First two weeks of October	28%
Last two weeks of October	47%
A few days before Election Day	16%
On Election Day	5%

Voters' perceptions about the electoral process are conditioned by the performance of officials managing the election. Voters who dropped off their ballots were overwhelmingly satisfied with poll workers performance, as approximately 99% of voters rated their performance either "Excellent" (83%) or "Good" (19%).

We also asked voters about activities (see Table 2.6) that they might have observed at drop box locations. We found that 7% reported observing people peacefully holding signs or giving out literature. A super majority (89%) reported that they did not observe any of these activities.

Table 2.6. When you returned your ballot to a drop box, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place near it? Mark all that apply

Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent	1%
Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people were properly dropping off ballots	0%
Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun	1%
Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who did not seem to be a reporter	1%
People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question	7%
I did not observe any of these things	89%

²⁴ 16% of voters who did not remember when they returned their ballot are excluded from the table.

According to NM law, it is a “violation of law for any person who is not an immediate family member to collect and deliver a ballot.” Therefore, on the outside envelope of the VBM ballot there is a place for a voter to indicate if they are not returning their own ballot and to indicate their relationship to the voter who is returning it for them. However, because the law does not indicate what to do with ballots that are not delivered from an immediate family member or clarify who is an immediate family member, these ballots are qualified and counted.

Many states that have similar language have updated their laws to clarify what should be done with these ballots. **We recommend that lawmakers consider this issue in their next election clean-up bill since it does not make sense for the state to have voters put this information on the outer ballot envelope since it is not collected or analyzed and does not change the qualification of the ballot.** Before 2020 many counties disqualified VBM ballots that were brought in by anyone outside of the immediate family. Changes in rules and procedures in 2020 set a uniform standard to count these ballots regardless of who they were delivered by. The statute is either unnecessary and should be eliminated or it should be clarified as to how to handle these ballots. For example, Florida law allows voters to return immediate family member’s ballot and two additional ballots not belonging to an immediate family member, such as a friend.²⁵

To determine whether voters comply with this law, the survey asked the following three questions: (1) “Who returned your ballot or dropped it in the mail?” (2) “Did you return someone else’s ballot?”, and if they returned another voter’s ballot, (3) “Whose ballot did you return?”

Only voters themselves, members of that voter’s immediate family, or a caregiver to that voter can submit the absentee ballot. (Immediate family means spouse, partners, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents or siblings.) So, we also asked voters who returned their ballot. Voters can return their own ballot, or have their ballot returned by someone permitted under the law. As shown in Table 2.7, around eight in nine voters (87%) returned their own ballot, one in eleven voters (9%) reported that their ballot was returned by a member of immediate family.

Table 2.7. Who returned your ballot?

I did	87%
A member of my immediate family did	9%
My Roommate did	< 1%
A friend of mine did	< 1%
A political party or interest group member did	0%
A stranger did	0%

Voters who indicated that they returned someone else’s ballot were then asked whose ballot they returned. Table 2.8 reports that approximately four in five voters (79%) indicated that they returned their spouse or partner’s ballot. Another 13% returned their parents’ ballots. 11% said they returned another family member’s ballot, and 4% returned their children’s ballot. 1% said they returned the ballot of a friend. Overall, the data suggest that about 99% of voters either

²⁵ See Fla. Stat. §101.65, 104.0616.

returned their ballot themselves or had a family member do so and only 1% of voters had a friend return their ballot.

Table 2.8. Whose ballot(s) did you return?

Spouse or Partner	79%
Parent or Parents	13%
Other family member	11%
Child or Children	4%
Roommate	0%
Friend	1%

We also asked voters that returned someone else’s ballot, “How many ballots did you return?” We found that 86% of voters returned two ballots, while less than one in ten (9%) returned 3, and 1% returned four.

Following Instruction and Ballot Tracking

Most voters seemed to have positive experiences engaging with their ballots. To assess how respondents felt about voting by mail, we first asked: “Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted?” This question aimed to capture voters’ perceptions about accessibility, clarity and understanding of ballot instructions to ensure successful return. We found that 96% of the voters found the process very (75%) or somewhat easy (21%). Democrats found instructions slightly more convenient than Independents and Republicans (see Table 2.9).

Table 2.9. Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted?

Response	Republicans	Democrats	Independents	Overall
Very easy	68%	81%	68%	75%
Somewhat easy	27%	16%	30%	21%
Somewhat hard	4%	3%	1%	3%
Very hard	1%	0%	0%	1%

In New Mexico, voters can track their ballots to see whether their ballot has been received and accepted, a reassurance mechanism for the voters. Nearly half of the VBM voters (49%) tracked their ballot. Voters who indicated that they choose not to track their ballot were asked to explain why they choose not to do so (see Table 2.10). While 46% of the voters fully trusted that their ballot would be received and counted by the election officials, 47% were not aware that they could track their ballot. A very small percent did not feel comfortable tracking their ballot information (1%) or did not care if their ballot was rejected or did not arrive on time (1%). Among those who gave a write-in answer, many chose to hand deliver their ballots, so presumably did not feel the need to track it. We found Democrats (51%) and Independents (46%) were more likely to mark that they fully trusted that their ballot would be received and counted than Republicans (34%). That’s a significant change from 2022, when we found that four out of

five Democrats (81%) but also over half of Independents (55%) were much more likely to mark that they fully trusted that their ballot would be received and counted than Republicans (11%).

Given that so many voters were unaware that they could track their ballot, **we recommend a county clerk or state level media campaign directed at VBM voters informing them of this opportunity to ensure their vote is accepted and counted.**

Table 2.10. Which of the following describes the reason(s) you chose NOT to track your ballot? Please mark all that apply

I was not aware that I could track my ballot	47%
I fully trusted my ballot would be received and counted by the election officials	46%
Other, please describe why you chose not to track your ballot	13%
I was worried my contact information would be used for non-election purposes	4%
I did not feel comfortable tracking my ballot information online or through text messages	1%
I did not care if my ballot was rejected or did not arrive on time	1%

VBM voters were asked if they were contacted by their local officials because there was a problem with their ballot and it could not be counted. Approximately 98% of voters were not contacted and only 2% said yes. Nearly all voters do not have any problems with their VBM ballots.

2.2. In-person (Early and Election Day) Voter Experience

In New Mexico, early in-person voting began on October 8, 2024 and ran through Saturday, November 2, 2024. On Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2024, county vote centers were open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Same-day/Election Day registration (SDR) was available, as eligible voters could register and vote in-person during early voting and on Election Day. No identification was strictly required for in-person polling, especially for people who voted in previous elections. However, for those doing SDR/EDR or for first-time voters who registered by mail and did not submit identification, a photo ID plus proof of address in the county was required.²⁶

Wait Times

The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration Commission recommended that voters wait no longer than 30 minutes to cast their ballot. New Mexico’s recent average wait times are well under the 30-minute benchmark. The state generally meets the Commission’s standard. Approximately 97% of voters had a wait period of 30 minutes or less in 2024. NM in-person voters, on average, reported waiting about 6 minutes to vote. This is much shorter than the time voters waited in line in 2020 during COVID, which took an average of 20 minutes and a bit shorter than voters waited in line in 2022, which was 7 minutes.

²⁶ <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GOVPUB-PR-PURL-gpo45379>

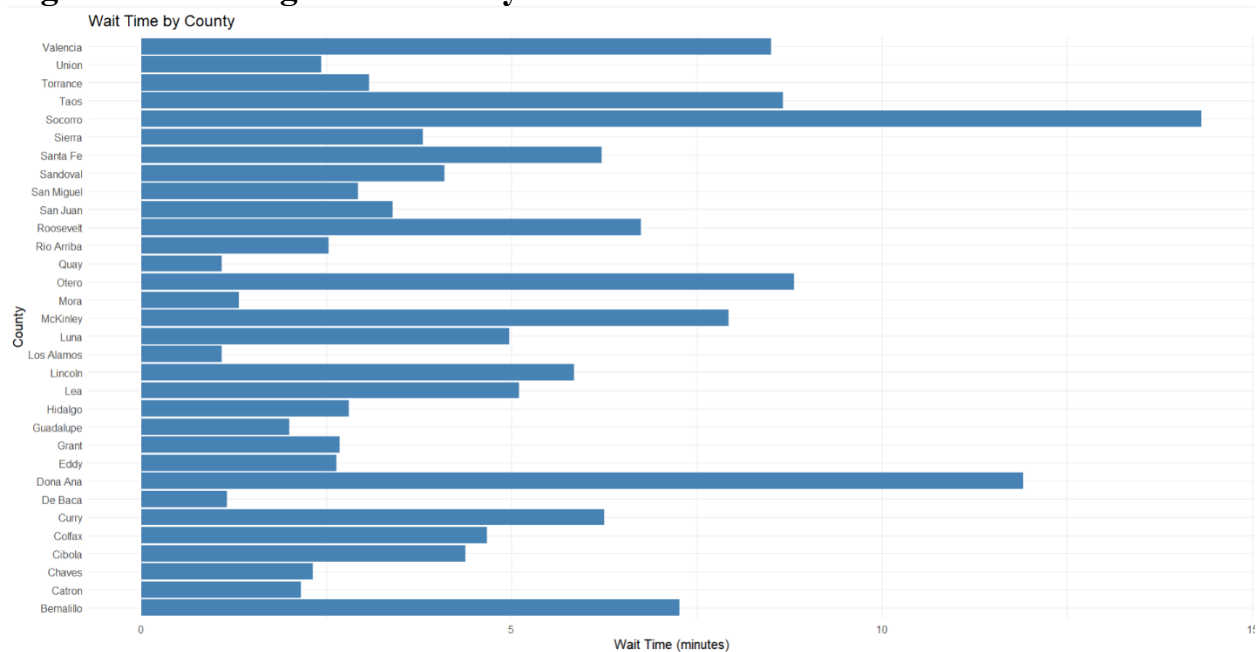
On Election Day voters in 2024 reported being in line on average a little longer (nearly 8 minutes) than early in-person voters (nearly 6 minutes). In 2022 Election Day voters were also in line for more extended periods than early voters, 10 minutes versus four minutes.

Table 2.11. About how many minutes did you wait in the check-in line before you were able to vote?

1-5	68%
6-10	14%
11-15	7%
16-20	4%
21-25	1%
26-30	3%
31-60	2%
61-120	1%

We also have county-level wait-time distributions for some of New Mexico counties. Our data indicates that, although there were some outlier cases, voter experiences were similar across counties in terms of wait times, with all counties experiencing average wait times under 15 minutes (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Average wait time by counties



Polling Location Experience

Voters in New Mexico visit a voting convenience center (VCC) instead of a voting precinct. Anyone can vote at any Vote Center in their county. Vote centers are large areas with plenty of parking to facilitate a high volume of voters at once.

In New Mexico, the “Board of County Commissioners” in each county is responsible for approving the most convenient and suitable public or private building for VCCs that are chosen by the County Clerk. The law allows the county to locate a voting convenience center in any suitable place if a public building is not available. Voting Convenience Centers are distributed throughout the county, to ensure geographic coverage, accessibility, and compliance with standards of fairness and convenience.

Poll locations and poll worker-voter interactions are necessary for the smooth running of an election. Additionally, it is important that poll worker interactions be positive for the voter to build confidence in their vote being counted correctly. In most voting locations in New Mexico, poll workers are trained for specific positions including the presiding judge, sometimes an exceptions judge, clerk, greeter, and machine judge.

- Overall, nearly all voters (96%) reported that their poll workers were very (78%) or somewhat helpful (18%).
- Voting locations used to offer a privacy sleeve to voters to secure their ballot when they move about the vote center. We have found previously that a privacy sleeve helps increase voter confidence since it protects ballot privacy, which correlates with higher voter confidence. While about one in four (25%) voters said that they used a privacy sleeve, we observed no privacy sleeves being offered in any vote centers in Sandoval County. **We recommend that the NM SOS and county clerks reinstate the use of privacy sleeves that were commonly used across the state before COVID and the 2020 election.** Voters desire privacy and it helps them feel more positive about their voting experience.

Finding Voting Convenience Centers (VCC)

Despite fewer polling locations in a VCC environment, voters do not appear to be inconvenienced in terms of voting locations. Early and Election Day voters reported that they quickly found their voting location. These voters were asked to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement, "The location was easy to find."

- Nearly all in-person voters (96%) either agreed (28%) or strongly agreed (68%) that their voting location was easy to find.
- Only 6% of voters either agreed (4%) or strongly agreed (2%) that they had to go out of their way to reach their vote center.

Parking Problems

We found that most voters did not have problems parking during early or Election Day voting. We asked early and Election Day voters to agree or disagree with the statement, “It was hard to find a place to park.”

- Overall, only 9% of voters felt that it was difficult to find a place to park, while 91% of voters felt that it was easy to find a place to park.

- Though small, one in ten voters having problems parking is suggestive of a problem. County clerks should look carefully at parking.

2.3. Voter Identification

The state of NM requires that voters state their name, address, and birth year, or present a physical form of identification such as a voter registration card, driver's license, or utility bill. If the voter chooses to provide photographic identification, it does not have to contain their address. If they decide to use a non-photo form of identification (such as a bank statement), it must include an address, although it is not required to match the registered address on the voter rolls. First-time voters who registered with the federal postcard and same-day registration voters are required to provide acceptable forms of photo identification like a driver's license, state-issued ID, passport, or tribal ID.

We asked, "In New Mexico, the voter gets to choose how they want to be identified at the polls. They can provide (1) their name, address, and birth year, (2) a photo ID, or (3) a non- photo ID. What type of identification did you provide?" In 2024 (see Table 2.12) half of the voters (50%) used name, address and birth year as their identification, while over 1 in every 3 voters (37%) provided a photo ID.

Reporting in 2024 is similar to the results for 2020 and 2022. About one-half of in-person voters indicated that they provided the poll worker with the minimum identification--their name, address, and birth year. However, 37% say they provided a photo ID, an increase from 31% in 2020 and 30% in 2022.

Table 2.12. What type of identification did you provide?

	2020	2022	2024
Name, address, and birth year	50%	52%	50%
A photo ID (driver's license, military ID, or passport)	31%	30%	37%
Voter Registration Card/ a QR code that was sent to me by the county	14%	14%	13%
Photo ID	31%	30%	37%
Poll worker asked for the Photo ID	30%	29%	31%
I just provided it to the poll worker	60%	63%	60%
I don't remember	10%	8%	9%

From experience, we know that voters often get in line and pull out their driver's license or other state-issued ID because they believe it is required, see someone else do it, or want to provide it. Therefore, we asked a follow-up question to voters who indicated they used a photo ID, also shown in Table 2.12, "Thinking back, did a poll worker ask for a photo or non-photo ID, or did you just provide it to them without being asked?" Nearly three in five voters (60%) recalled just providing it to the poll worker without being asked, while almost one-third (31%) said that the poll worker asked for the photo ID, a slight increase from 2020 (30%) and 2022 (29%). So

overall, 11% of voters were incorrectly required to show a photo ID in 2024, up from 2022 (9%) and 2020 (9%).

During our election observation in Sandoval County, we noticed that the signage for SDR, which listed required documents such as a driver's license or other photo IDs to register the same day, was placed such that those in line to vote were confused about what was required in terms of identification to vote. **We recommend that the SDR stations be placed further away from the check in stations for those voting in person.**

2.4. Voter Confidence

Voter confidence is essential for a functioning democracy as it reflects the citizens' trust in the integrity of the electoral system. Citizens are more likely to accept the outcome when they are confident about the integrity and fairness of the electoral system. High confidence in the electoral system strengthens political stability, democratic legitimacy, and encourages the peaceful transfer of power. Therefore, maintaining voter confidence in the electoral system through transparency, accountability and effective communication is vital. To assess voter confidence in the electoral system, we asked four questions.

First, we asked, "How confident are you that YOUR vote in this year's General Election was counted as you intended?" Response options were "very confident," "somewhat confident," "not too confident," and "not at all confident."

The second level is confidence in the electoral system of voter's own county. We asked, "Think about vote counting throughout your county and not just your own personal situation. How confident are you that votes in your county were counted as voters intended in the 2024 general election?" As the primary election management unit, county administration plays a critical role in ensuring elections are conducted fairly, efficiently and securely. County responsibilities include voter registration and list maintenance, polling logistics, ballot management, counting, and reporting.

The third level is confidence in state election administration. State election administration, led by the Secretary of State, plays a central role in overseeing and coordinating the electoral process. Typically, it establishes election laws, clarifies results, and provides guidance to county or local administrators. In New Mexico, the Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver oversaw the elections in 2024.

The fourth level is the confidence that all ballots were counted correctly nationwide. At this level, voters have relatively little knowledge of the election processes of other states. As elections are primarily administered at the state and local level, national governments have little influence except regulatory rules.

This study uses three different methods to look at confidence across levels of administration. First, we observe all voters to evaluate the general level of confidence New Mexicans have in their elections. Next, we investigate confidence by voting method, distinguishing diverse modes

of casting a ballot that often create separate voter experiences. Finally, we explore the variance by party affiliation.

Looking at voter confidence across levels of administration, we see in Table 2.13 that voter confidence is highest at the individual level and gradually declines as the level of administration rises. For their individual votes, 89% of voters stated that they were either “very confident” (60%) or “somewhat confident” (29%) that their vote was counted as intended. Similarly, 88% of voters selected the top two options for the votes in their county. At the state and national levels, confidence declines further to 82% for the state and 73% nationwide.

Table 2.13. Voter confidence that their ballot was counted as voters intended at each level

Confidence	Your Vote	Votes in your county	Votes in your state	Nationwide
Very Confident	60%	55%	44%	31%
Somewhat confident	29%	33%	38%	42%
Not too confident	7%	9%	13%	18%
Not at all confident	4%	3%	5%	9%

Table 2.14 shows the average confidence across level by party and vote mode, where the confidence variables are coded on a 4-point scale, from 1 (not confident at all to 4 very confident). We can see strong influence of partisanship on confidence, as Democrats show greater trust in the electoral system than Republican voters at every level except nationwide where voter confidence is largely viewed the same across parties.

VBM voters were the most confident across all levels, followed by early voters, with Election Day voters being the least confident. Election Day voters are also more likely to be DTS and less likely to be mobilized, which also may affect their confidence. In addition, Election Day voters were slightly more confident in the state (3.06) than their county (2.80).

Table 2.14. Average confidence scores

Averages	Your Vote	Votes in your county	Votes in your state	Nationwide
Overall average	3.45	3.36	3.2	2.96
Vote Mode				
VBM voters	3.56	3.50	3.46	3.06
Early voters	3.48	3.39	3.21	2.98
Election Day voters	3.36	3.21	3.06	2.87
Party				
Democrats	3.64	3.55	3.53	2.98
Republicans	3.29	3.14	2.78	2.94
Independents	3.31	3.28	3.17	2.96

Finally, we examine the relationship between voter demographics and voter confidence. In Table 2.15 we see that voters aged 65 or older expressed the greatest confidence that their ballot was counted correctly with 68% saying they were very confident, compared to 58% of voters 45-64,

52% for 30-44 year-olds and 56% for 18-29 year-olds. Overall, 88% of the voters between 18-29 years of age were somewhat or very confident about their individual ballot being counted as intended, whereas 93% of voters among 65 or older believed the same. Voters aged 30-44 were the least confident with 17% Not too confident or Not at all confident that their ballot was counted. This is compared to 12% for voters 18-29 and 45-64, with only 7% of those 65 and older being not too or not at all confident.

**Table 2.15. How confident are you that your ballot was counted as intended?
By Age Groups**

Response	18 to 29	30 to 44	45 to 64	65 or older
Very confident	56%	52%	58%	68%
Somewhat confident	32%	31%	30%	25%
Not too confident	8%	10%	8%	5%
Not at all confident	4%	7%	4%	2%

There is no significant difference in voter confidence by gender or between white and Hispanic voters.

Chapter 3. Beliefs about Ballot Privacy, Possibility of Voter Coercion, Fraud, and Attitudes Towards Election Reforms

This chapter focuses on voters' attitudes toward their ballot, fraud, and election reform policies and changes.

- In section 3.1 we focus on whether voters feel their ballot is kept private and how willing they are to tell others their vote choice.
- In Section 3.2 we examine beliefs about voter fraud.
- In Section 3.3 we look at attitudes toward voter identification laws.
- In Section 3.4 we examine attitudes toward a variety of election reforms including permanent VBM elections, 4-digit social security identification for vote-by-mail, machine versus hand counts, and post-election audits.

3.1. Ballot Privacy

Central to American elections are notions that a voter's ballot is secret and that who they voted for is private. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and other election laws reinforce ballot secrecy by prohibiting practices that could intimidate or influence voters. To ensure privacy, private spaces or voting booths are provided at polling places, ballots are designed to ensure that individual votes cannot be tracked back to a voter, officials who are managing elections are legally bound to maintain confidentiality. Secrecy and privacy help prevent coercion and intimidation in voting and increase the integrity and confidence of the electoral process. Beliefs that the electoral process or outcomes are illegitimate can arise if there is a lack or perceived lack of vote secrecy and privacy.

In New Mexico, state laws and electoral procedures firmly protect the right to vote anonymously. VBM ballots use a double envelope so that ballot qualification is confirmed with the outside envelope and then separated from the inside envelope that contains the voted ballot. The second envelope is opened at another station at which point the ballot is fed into a vote tabulator. In this way, voter privacy is protected because qualification and counting do not happen simultaneously. For in-person voters, privacy is also essential; poll workers who work the tabulator are taught not to look at the ballot and instead listen for the bell or other sounds from the vote tabulator. This is also why we recommend a voter privacy sleeve. The voter privacy sleeve is a long legal-sized file folder that the voter can place their ballot into when they are moving from station to station in the polling location to ensure privacy. Once the vote is counted and in the tabulator bin, it is impossible to determine the order of ballots or to identify anyone's vote. In New Mexico only about 25% of voters are using a privacy sleeve. **We recommend that counties adopt privacy sleeves for voters to use to place their ballot in while they are moving about the vote center.**

If a ballot error is detected, the poll worker is trained to cover up the ballot and look at the readout on the machine to communicate the error to the voter. If the voter spoils her ballot and

gets a new one to vote, the spoiled ballot is marked as spoiled and placed in a spoiled ballot envelope by the poll judge, exceptions judge or other poll worker. This is actually a problem for voter privacy and one we observed repeatedly with our election observation team in Sandoval County. For the most part, when voters spoiled or made a mistake on a ballot the process led to a poll worker interacting quite a bit with a voter’s ballot, touching it, viewing it, and recording it as spoiled. **We recommend that instead of the poll worker touching the ballot and placing it into the spoiled ballot envelope, that the voter maintains custody of the ballot in a privacy sleeve and places the spoiled ballot in the proper envelope when the process is complete.**

- Overall, 96% of in-person voters either strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (39%) with the statement, “My ballot privacy was protected”. Only 6% of voters reported that a poll worker looked at their voted ballot and 2% stated that someone in the line at the polling place asked who they were voting for.
- For VBM voters 91% either strongly agreed (62%) or agreed (29%) with the statement, “My ballot privacy was maintained when my vote was counted.”
- However, VBM voters were less likely to keep their choices private at home. Over two thirds of VBM voters (68%) either strongly agreed (45%) or agreed (23%) with the statement, “I kept my ballot and my ballot choices private at home.”

Ballot Privacy

According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. We asked voters how hard it would be for someone to find out who they voted for even if they did not disclose their vote.

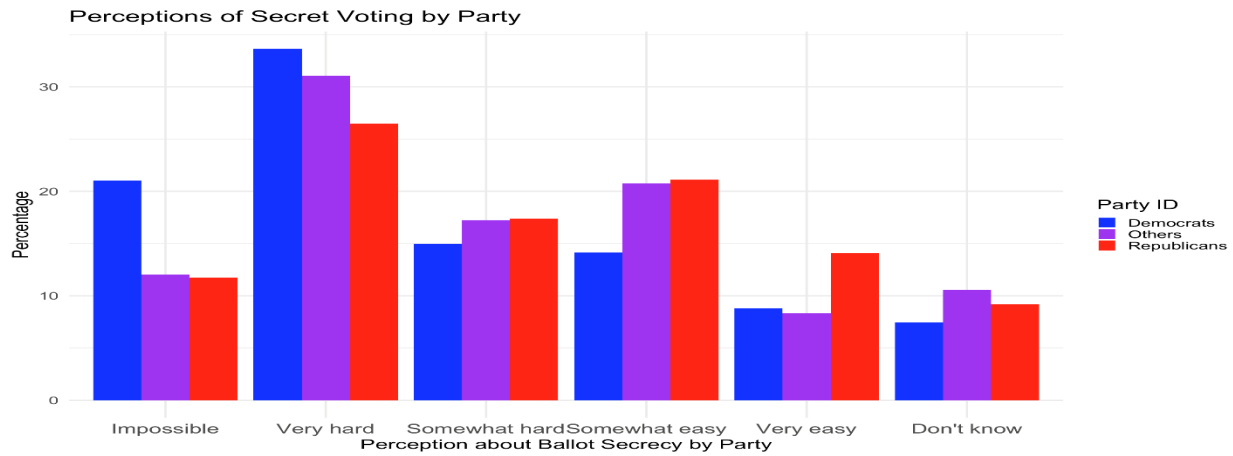
Table 3.1. According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy, or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one?

	2020	2022	2024
Impossible, my vote is secret	16%	21%	16%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	25%	29%	31%
It would be somewhat hard	14%	13%	16%
It would be somewhat easy	16%	13%	18%
It would be very easy	17%	15%	11%
Don't know	12%	9%	8%

The 29% of respondents who selected “very easy” (11%) or “somewhat easy” (18%) looks very similar to the 2022 election, and slightly worse than in 2020. Thus it appears there has not been much change. In all three years about 30% of voters believe it would somewhat or very easy to learn who someone voted for even if they told no one. Given that three in ten voters believe their privacy is at risk, **we recommend the county clerks and the secretary of state implement a social media advertising campaign that describes how voter privacy is maintained.**

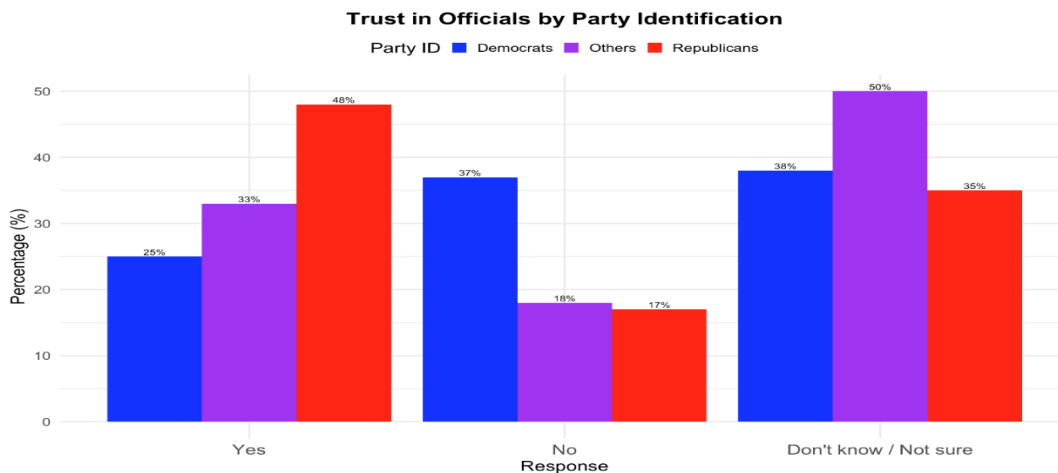
Democrats are more likely to believe it is impossible (21%) than Independents (12%) or GOP voters (12%).

Figure 3.1. “How Easy or Hard is it For Politicians, Union Officials, or Employers to Find Out My Vote Even If I Told No One?” by Party ID



We then asked voters, “Do you think election officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter has voted for?” Responses were mixed, with 34% of voters stating yes and 27% stating no. The remaining 39% either didn’t know or were not sure. Nearly half of Republican voters (48%) believe that election officials can access voting records and figure out whom they voted for, while only 33% of Independents and 25% of Democrats believe so.

Figure 3.2. Election Officials Can Identify Vote, by Party



Those who stated yes were asked a follow-up question, “Do you think election officials can more easily identify who you voted for when you use a vote-by-mail ballot, an in-person ballot, or are they about the same?” The majority of respondents (62%) stated that both were equally likely to be identified and approximately a third (32%) of them stated that vote-by-mail is easier to

identify. Only 6% of respondents believed that in-person voters ballot choices are easier to identify.

We hypothesized that VBM voters would be the most likely to think their vote might be identifiable, given that they include identifying references such as their signature along with their ballot and because they do not get to observe the counting process. However, we did not find this to be the case. Instead, similar to 2020, Election Day voters were the most concerned about their ballot privacy: 39% of Election Day voters reported election officials can figure out who a voter voted for, while 33% of early and only 28% of VBM voters feel the same way.

3.2. Beliefs about Election Fraud and Other Anomalies

We asked in-person voters, “Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2024 General Election?” These results are detailed in Table 3.2 and suggest that the vast majority (84%) of voters perceived no voter fraud or intimidation. The most frequently chosen was someone helping someone fill out their ballot in the voter center (7%).

Table 3.2. Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2024 General Election? [Please mark all that apply.]

Someone bribes a voter or pays for votes	2%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	1%
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	2%
Someone helping someone fill out their ballot in the vote center	7%
Someone using a false identity to vote illegally	1%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	2%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop box	1%
None of these	84%

Orphan Ballots

With VBM, the process happens out of sight: you mail your ballot, but you cannot “see” it being received, verified, or counted. This lack of visibility breeds uncertainty, especially for people unfamiliar with mail voting systems. While VBM ballots are authenticated with the last 4 digits of a voter’s social security number to ensure integrity, voters may become concerned about the integrity of the process when ballots arrive at their home for a voter who does not live there.

We asked, “Did you receive a ballot in the mail that didn’t belong to you or anyone in your household?” Approximately 4% of voters stated they received a VBM ballot that did not belong to them or anyone in their household.

Receiving a mail ballot that did not belong to the voter has a substantial negative effect on confidence in the electoral system. Among voters who received an incorrect ballot, 40% reported low confidence that their ballot would be counted as intended—17% said they were not confident at all and 23% said they were not too confident. By comparison, only 11% of voters overall and 9% of voters who did not receive an incorrect ballot expressed similarly low levels of

confidence (Table 3.3). This pattern is consistent at the county and state levels, indicating a general lack of confidence in ballot counting when orphan ballots are received.

Table 3.3. Confidence in ballot counting, by presence or absence of orphan ballots

Confidence personal ballot was counted		
Level of confidence	People who didn't receive an orphan ballot	People who received a ballot that didn't belong to them
Very confident	62%	27%
Somewhat Confident	29%	33%
Not too confident	6%	23%
Not at all confident	3%	17%
Confidence in county ballot count		
Level of confidence	People who didn't receive an orphan ballot	People who received a ballot that didn't belong to them
Very confident	55%	17%
Somewhat Confident	33%	31%
Not too confident	9%	32%
Not at all confident	3%	20%
Confidence in state ballot count		
Level of confidence	People who didn't receive an orphan ballot	People who received a ballot that didn't belong to them
Very confident	45%	14%
Somewhat Confident	38%	19%
Not too confident	12%	48%
Not at all confident	5%	19%

Beliefs in the Frequency of Types of Election Fraud

Many voters may never personally observe fraud, but they hear about alleged fraud via media, social networks, political commentary, or stories from other jurisdictions. We asked voters the following question (Table 3.4): “Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in New Mexico. How often do you think each event occurs in your state?” Voters could respond: never (1); hardly ever (2); not much (3); some of the time (4); all or most of the time (5).

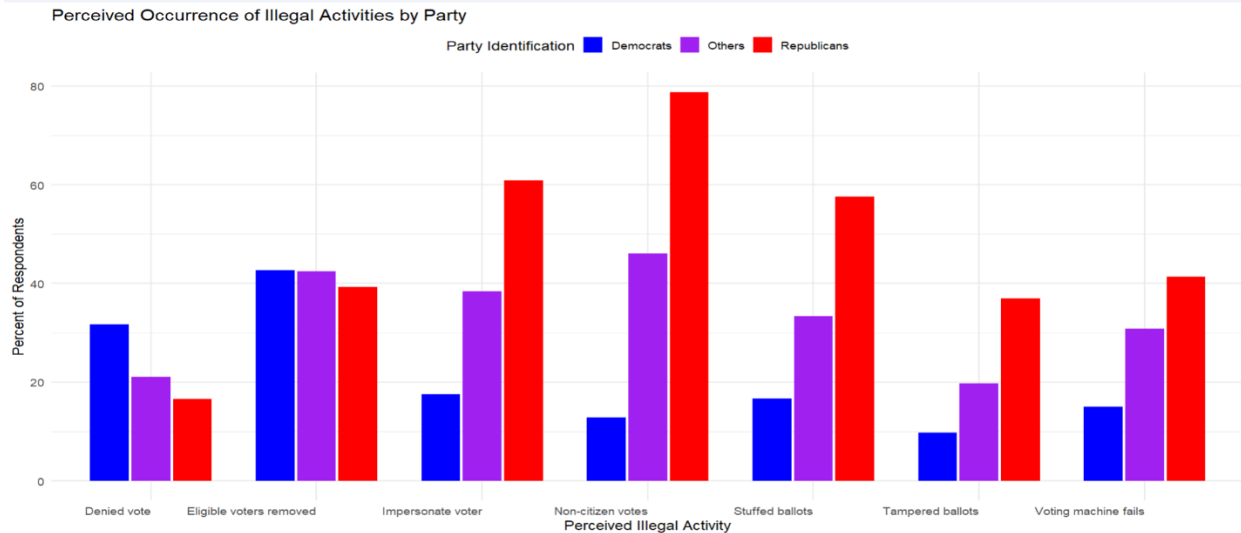
Table 3.4. Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in New Mexico. How often do you think each event occurs in New Mexico?

	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Not much	Hardly ever	Never
Eligible voters get mistakenly removed from the voter registration file during purges/clean-up	5%	37%	28%	24%	6%
A non-US citizen vote	16%	27%	12%	25%	20%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	2%	23%	27%	34%	14%
Ballots are tampered with to change votes	4%	18%	24%	29%	25%
People submit too many ballots in drop boxes on behalf of others	8%	28%	22%	27%	15%
Someone pretends to be another person and votes for them	6%	31%	17%	33%	12%
Voting machines fail to count votes accurately	4%	24%	23%	34%	15%

- Between 30% and 54% believe that one of these events happens never or hardly ever, suggesting that, in general, some voters believe these events happen at least occasionally if not more.
- About two in five (42%) voters believe that eligible voters are mistakenly removed from the voter file all (5%) or some of the time (37%) during clean up.
- Voters’ most frequent belief is that non-US citizens vote. Approximately 43% agree this happens all or most of the time (16%) or some of the time (27%).
- Just over 1 in 3 voters (36%) believed that people submit too many ballots in drop boxes on behalf of others all or most of the time (8%) or some of the time (28%).
- Around 1 in every 4 voters, 25% of voters stated that they believed someone is improperly denied the chance to vote all (2%) or some (23%) of the time.

In Figure 3.3 we see that Republicans have the highest belief in election fraud happening “all or most of the time” or “some of the time” in all the following categories: noncitizen voting (79%), ballot tampering (37%), ballot stuffing (58%) and voter impersonation (61%). 79% of Republicans believe a non-citizen votes all the time (36%) or some of the time (43%), 37% of Republicans believe ballots are tampered with to change votes all of the time (9%) or some of the time (28%), 58% believe ballot stuffing happens all of the time (17%) or some of the time (41%) and 61% believe that voter impersonation happens all of the time (13%) or some of the time (48%). Democrats have the highest belief that eligible voters are removed from the voter file or improperly denied a chance to vote. 43% of Democrats believe that eligible voters are removed from the voter file all of the time (5%) or some of the time (38%), while 32% of Democrats believe that someone being improperly denied a chance to vote happens all of the time (2%) or some of the time (30%).

Figure 3.3. Perceived Occurrence of Illegal Activities by Party



3.3. Attitudes toward Election Reform

Public confidence in elections is the foundation of democratic governance. Yet in recent years, surveys show declining trust in election integrity, particularly after contentious elections. Many voters, especially partisans whose preferred candidates lose at the top of the ticket, believe elections are unfair or vulnerable to manipulation. Voting access and election security are both integral in ensuring a successful election system. However, there is an innate tension between these concepts. Increasing access to the ballots could potentially increase the risk of fraud, while increasing election security could decrease voter access.

To assess the attitudes between this tradeoff, we asked respondents, “Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important?” Overall, 58% of voters cited protecting the voting system against fraud as more important, while 42% believed that protecting voting rights of everyone eligible is more important, a 16-point difference.

The question of access and integrity is polarized by partisanship. Republicans overwhelmingly (85%) and Independents strongly (63%) believed that protecting against fraud was more important, while Democrats believed ensuring that voter access (66%) was more important.

Table 3.5. Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important?

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Overall
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	66%	15%	37%	42%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	34%	85%	63%	58%

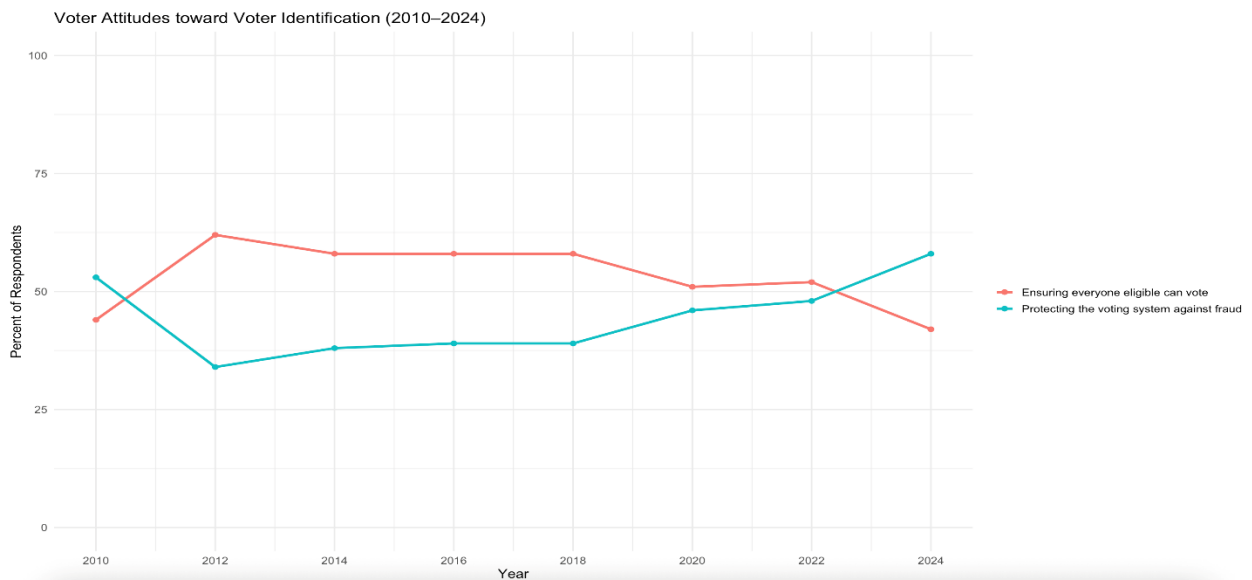
By race, we found consistent support for protecting the voting system against fraud. 54% of Whites, 62% of Hispanics and 60% of others believe it is more important to protect the voting system against fraud than ensure eligibility.

Table 3.6. Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important? By Race

	White	Hispanics	Others	Overall
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	46%	38%	40%	42%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	54%	62%	60%	58%

When we consider voter attitudes towards access versus security over time, we find that the 2024 election shows a strong shift in voter concerns over fraud, with 58% citing protecting against fraud, compared to only 48% in 2022. We have to go back to 2010 to see another election where the concern over fraud exceeded the concern over ensuring that everyone eligible has the right to vote.²⁷ This represents a significant shift in the concern for fraud from the previous election.

Figure 3.4. Voters Attitudes towards Access Versus Security (2010-2024)



²⁷ In 2008-2020 we include an option of DK which elicited 3% of responses. In 2022 and 2024, we dropped the DK option.

Previously, gender influenced responses, with more women favoring access, compared to men. Women are generally more Democratic, so this finding is also related to partisanship. But in 2024, only 38% of males and 45% of females supported ensuring access as the important factor (Table 3.7). Both men and women favored protecting the voting system against fraud.

Table 3.7. Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important? By Gender

Preference	Male	Female
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	38%	45%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	62%	55%

Attitudes Towards Voter Identification

Voter identification in New Mexico is different for in-person and VBM voters. While in-person voters get to choose how they want to be identified with the minimum response being, “name, address, and birth year,” mail voters are required to include the last 4 of their social security numbers. In response to the pandemic, the NM legislature made several changes to the law during a special legislative session. One such change was having VBM voters include the last four digits of their social security numbers on the outer envelope as an election integrity measure. Before this, NM had very minimal security and only required that voters sign the affidavit stating they were a qualified elector. NM has never done signature matching. For the 2022 election, NM returned to its signature affidavit as the requirement for a VBM voter. In 2023 the NM legislature decided to return to the last 4 digits of a voter’s social security number, in addition to their signed affidavit.

The in-person voter ID policy question asked, “New Mexico’s in-person voter ID law requires voters to state their address, name, and birth year to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is too strict, just right, or not strict enough?” For VBM voter ID policies the question asked, “New Mexico's vote-by-mail law requires voters to include the last 4 of their social security number to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is too strict, just right, or not strict enough?”

In the last column of Table 3.8. below, we report the overall responses. For the in-person requirement, we found that 56% of the voters think the requirement is just right, where 42% think the requirement is not strict enough. Only 2% think that the requirement is too strict. For the VBM requirement, we found that 65% of voters believe the requirement is just right, while 31% believe it is not strict enough. Only 4% believe it is too strict.

Traditionally, partisanship is a strong predictor of support for voter ID laws. As seen in Table 3.8. we found that 77% of Republicans believe the in-person law is not strict enough, compared to 12% of Democrats and 50% of Independents. Similarly, 85% of Democrats believe the requirement is just right, compared to only 23% of Republicans. For the VBM policy we found that 85% of Democrats and 68% of Independents felt this law was just right, compared to only 38% of Republicans. 60% of Republicans felt the law was not strict enough, compared to only

8% of Democrats and 29% of Independents. This is consistent with previous sections of this report that suggest Republicans are more concerned with protecting election integrity.

Table 3.8. Attitudes towards NM In-Person and VBM Identification Policies

Response	Republican	Democrat	Independents	Overall
In-person Policy				
Too strict	0%	3%	5%	2%
Just right	23%	85%	45%	56%
Not strict enough	77%	12%	50%	42%
VBM policy				
Too Strict	7%	2%	3%	4%
Just right	85%	38%	68%	65%
Not Strict Enough	8%	60%	29%	31%

We also looked for a potential relationship between support for voter ID laws and the respondent’s race and ethnicity. We found no significant effect of race or ethnic identity on support for voter ID.

We asked voters who indicated it was not strict enough a follow-up question, “What additional information would you require to verify the eligibility of the voter?” Results are shown in Table 3.9. Response options included a driver’s license, social security number, signature match and witness signature. For in-person voting approximately four in five voters (83%) suggested a driver’s license as the additional information requirement, followed by the voter’s social security number (30%) and signature match (27%). Witness signatures had little support among voters, as only 7% suggested using it.

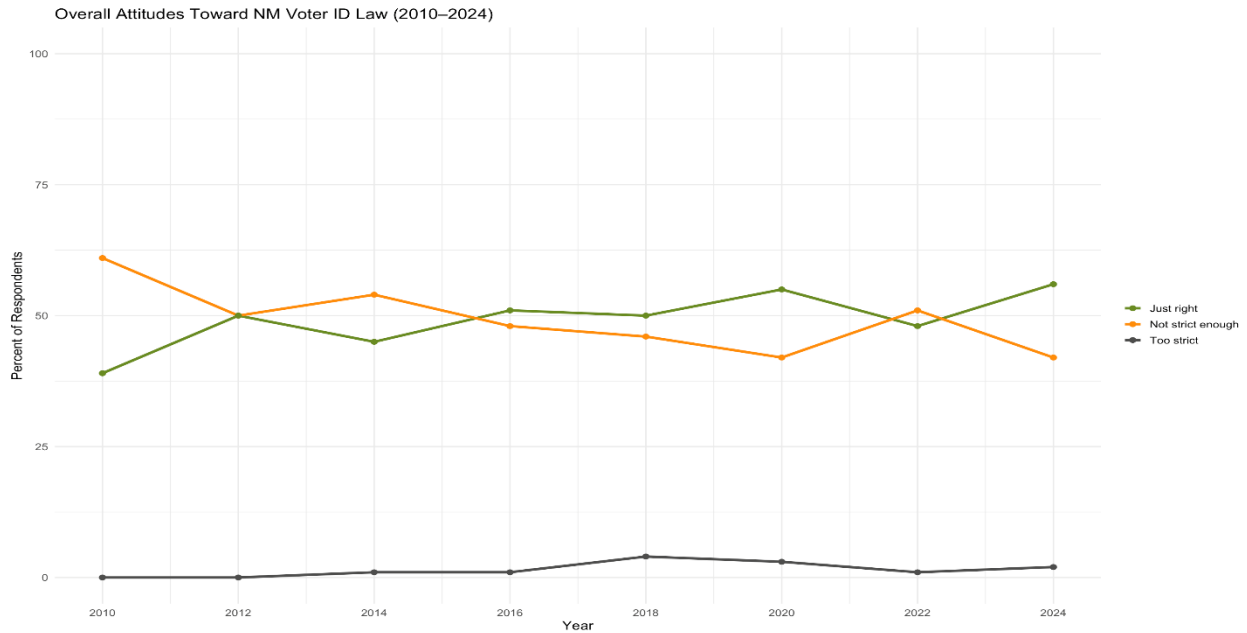
For mail voting 71% of voters supported requiring a copy of a photo ID to verify the eligibility of a vote-by-mail voter, followed by 57% who would support requiring a driver’s license number and 49% who would support a signature match. Witness signatures is again last at 20%.

Table 3.9. What additional information would you require to verify the eligibility of the voter? Mark all that apply.

In-person	
Driver’s license	83%
Social Security Number	30%
Signature match	27%
Witness signature	7%
VBM	
Copy of Photo ID	71%
Driver’s license number	57%
Signature match	49%
Witness signature	20%

Figure 3.5 considers voter attitudes towards the in-person voter ID law over time. Here we see, with the exception of 2022, a higher percentage of voters since 2016 stating that the law is just right as opposed to not strict enough. Belief that the law is too strict is consistently close to zero with the peak in 2018 at 4%.

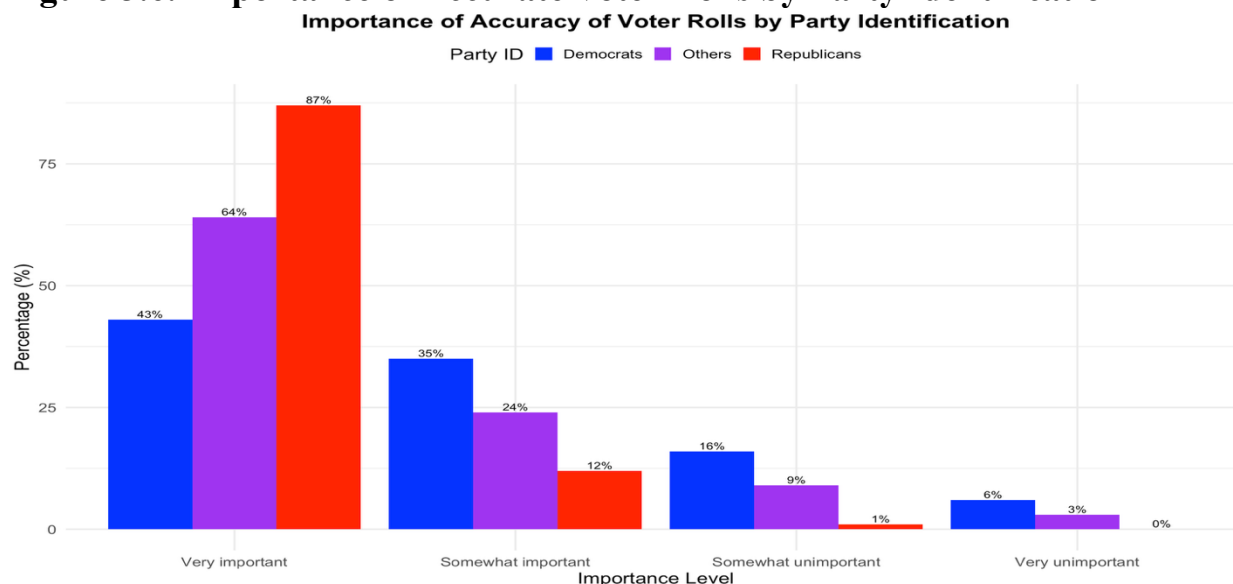
Figure 3.5. Attitudes Towards NM In-Person Voter ID Law Over Time



Accuracy of Voter Rolls

Earlier surveys asked voters how likely they believed it was that eligible voters had been mistakenly removed from voter rolls during list maintenance activities such as purges or clean-ups. Although 42% of respondents perceived this to be a likely occurrence, they still support file maintenance. We asked voters, “Thinking about election administration, how important or not is it to ensure accurate voter registration rolls, even if some eligible voters are removed and required to re-register for participation in future elections?” Over six in ten voters (63%) stated that this was very important and an additional 24% stated this was somewhat important. As seen in Figure 3.6, by party, 87% of Republicans indicate that this is very important, compared to 43% of Democrats. Only 6% of Democrats thought that this was very unimportant, compared to 0% of Republicans.

Figure 3.6. Importance of Accurate Voter Rolls by Party Identification



Same Day or Election Day Registration

Same-day/Election Day registration (SDR/EDR) permits voters who missed the traditional registration deadline to register and vote concurrently. In most cases, SDR/EDR requires voters to show proof of residency (such as a driver’s license, utility bill, or government document) at their polling place or designated early voting center. As of 2025, 22 states and the District of Columbia offer some form of SDR, though the specific procedures vary. Although research shows that same day registration increases voter turnout, opponents argue that SDR may increase administrative strain on local election officials, especially in jurisdictions with limited staffing or resources.

We asked voters, “Do you support or oppose allowing citizens to register and vote on the same day?” We found that 72% of voters supported same day registration and 28% opposed the measure as shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10. Do you support or oppose allowing citizens to register and vote on the same day?

Support	72%
Oppose	28%

Vote-by-Mail Reforms

All-mail elections are defined as elections in which all eligible registered voters are sent a ballot via USPS. Eight states and Washington, D.C. allow all elections to be conducted by mail.²⁸ We

²⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/table-18-states-with-all-mail-elections>

asked New Mexico voters “Do you support or oppose moving all your state and local elections to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting”.

Overall, Table 3.11 shows voters overwhelmingly oppose this election reform, with 63% of voters being strongly opposed and an additional 20% somewhat opposed. Only 17% of voters were somewhat (12%) or strongly (5%) supportive with strongly support only in the single digits.

Table 3.11. Do you support or oppose moving all your state and local elections to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting. By Party.

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Overall
Strongly support	9%	1%	3%	5%
Somewhat support	19%	3%	11%	12%
Somewhat oppose	29%	9%	21%	20%
Strongly oppose	43%	87%	64%	63%

Although we find a sizeable disparity between partisan groups, with 96% of Republicans opposed to all mail elections, compared to 72% of Democrats, a super majority of partisans would prefer not to move to all-mail voting.

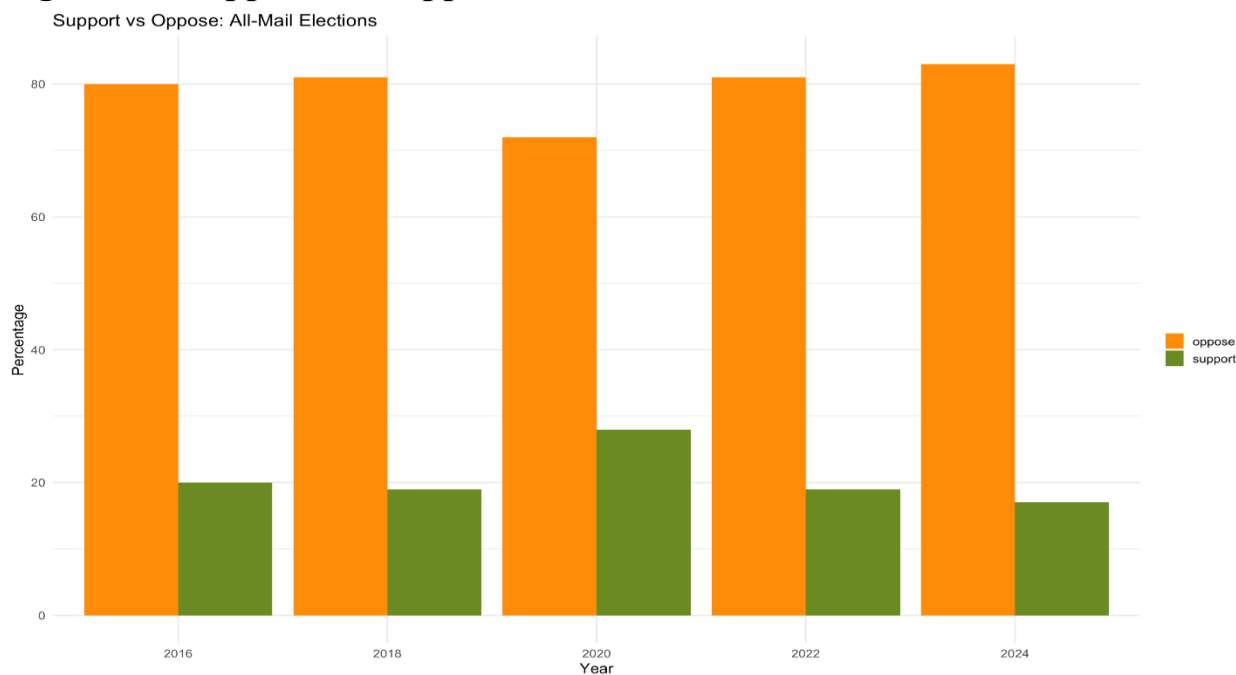
Voters who voted by mail are more supportive of moving to all mail elections than voters who voted in person, as shown in Table 3.12. Most in-person (86%) voters disagreed with moving to all-mail elections. Experiencing the VBM process increases support for this election change, but even for those voters, a majority (60%) are opposed to it.

Table 3.12. Do you support or oppose moving all your state and local elections to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting. By Vote Mode

	VBM	In-Person	Overall
Strongly Support	15%	4%	5%
Somewhat support	25%	10%	12%
Somewhat oppose	25%	19%	20%
Strongly oppose	35%	67%	63%

We have asked this question over time (Figure 7), and support lately for these policies has been withering. From 2010 to 2020, there was an increase in support for all-mail elections. In 2010 moving to all mail elections was supported by 17% of voters; in 2016, it was 20%; in 2018, it was 19%; and in 2020, it was 28%. Therefore, the move back to 19% in 2022 represented a clear shift against all-mail elections. In 2024, fewer than one in five (17%) of voters supported all-mail elections, similar to evaluation in 2010.

Figure 3.7. Support and Opposition for All-Mail Elections



Mail Ballot Arrival

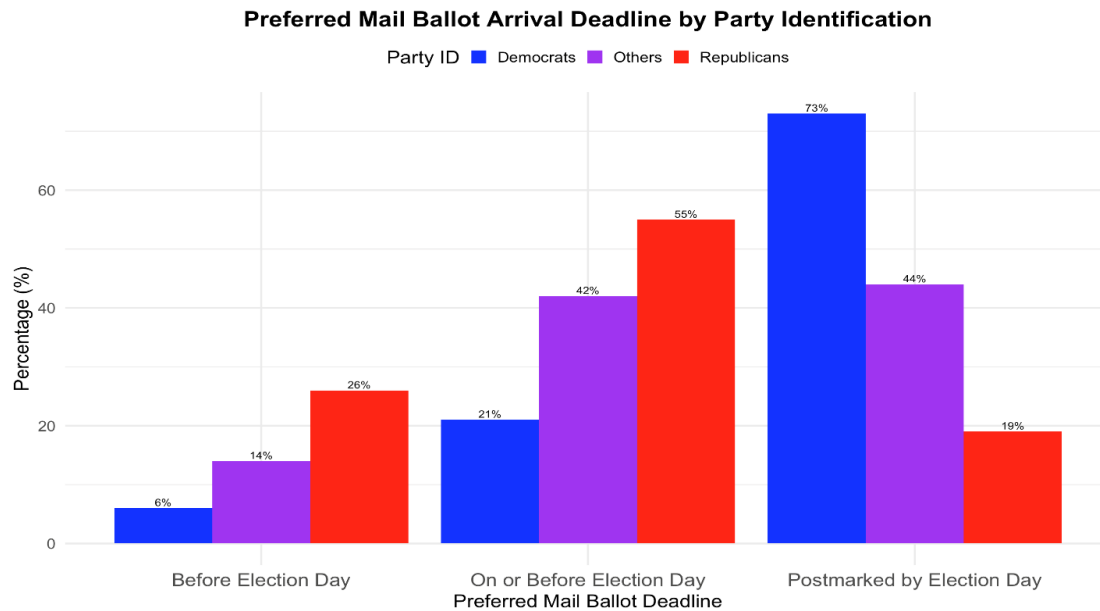
We asked voters when mail ballots should arrive at the local election office to be counted. Table 3.13 shows that a majority (52%) agree that mail ballots should have to arrive at the local election office on (37%) or before (15%) Election Day. 48% support counting VBM ballots that arrive after Election Day if it is postmarked on or before Election Day.

Table 3.13. Regardless of the laws in your state, what should the deadline be for a mail ballot to arrive at the clerk's office to be counted?

Only ballots that arrive before Election Day should be counted	15%
Only ballots that arrive on Election Day or before should be counted	37%
Ballots postmarked by Election Day should be counted as long as they arrive within a certain number of days after the election	48%

In Figure 3.8 we see that Republicans were much more likely to say that ballots should arrive before (25%) or on (52%) Election Day, compared to Democrats, 6% and 20% respectively. 73% of Democrats support allowing ballots to arrive after Election Day with a postmark on or before Election Day, compared to only 19% of Republicans and 44% of Independents.

Figure 3.8. Preferred Mail Ballot Arrival Deadline by Party Identification



There is significant gender difference, with 40% of male and 51% of female voters supporting allowing ballots to arrive after Election Day with a postmark by Election Day.

Securing the Vote

Vote tabulators are widely used in elections to count ballots efficiently and accurately. In most U.S. jurisdictions this involves optical scan technology, where voters mark their choices on a paper ballot that is then fed into a scanning machine. The scanner reads and records the vote electronically while preserving the original paper ballot as a physical backup. This system combines the speed of automation with the security of verifiable paper records, allowing for recounts and audits when needed. Research shows that tabulators are more accurate than voters²⁹ but recent concerns about the potential of election fraud has raised concerns about their accuracy prompting discussion around the possibility of hand counting.³⁰

We asked voters “Would you prefer ballots in your county to be counted by voting machines or by people by hand?” A vast majority of voters (77%) supported machine counts a lot (39%) or somewhat (38%), while 23% voters prefer (11%) or somewhat prefer (12%) hand counts. Again,

²⁹ Lonna Rae Atkeson, R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, Lisa A. Bryant, Yann Kereval, Morgan Llewellyn, David Odegaard. 2009. “The 2008 New Mexico Post Election Audit Report,” available at: <http://polisci.unm.edu/common/documents/c-sved/papers/nm08pew.pdf>; Stephen Goggin, Michael DJ Byrne, Juan E. Gilbert, 2012, Post-Election Auditing: Effects of Procedures and Ballot Type on Manual Counting Accuracy, Efficiency, and Auditor Satisfaction and Confidence,” *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics and Policy*, 11(1): 36-51, <https://doi.org/10.1089/elj.2010.0098>.

³⁰ Leo Wolfson, October 9, 2024, “Gillette Hand-Count Ballot Test Shows it Would Take Hundreds of Counters, cost up to \$1.3M, available at: <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2024/10/09/gillette-hand-count-ballot-test-shows-it-would-take-hundreds-of-counters-cost-up-to-1-3m/>.

we see a partisan difference with 85% of Democrats versus 68% of Republicans preferring machine counts but a large majority of all types of voters support machine counts over hand counts.

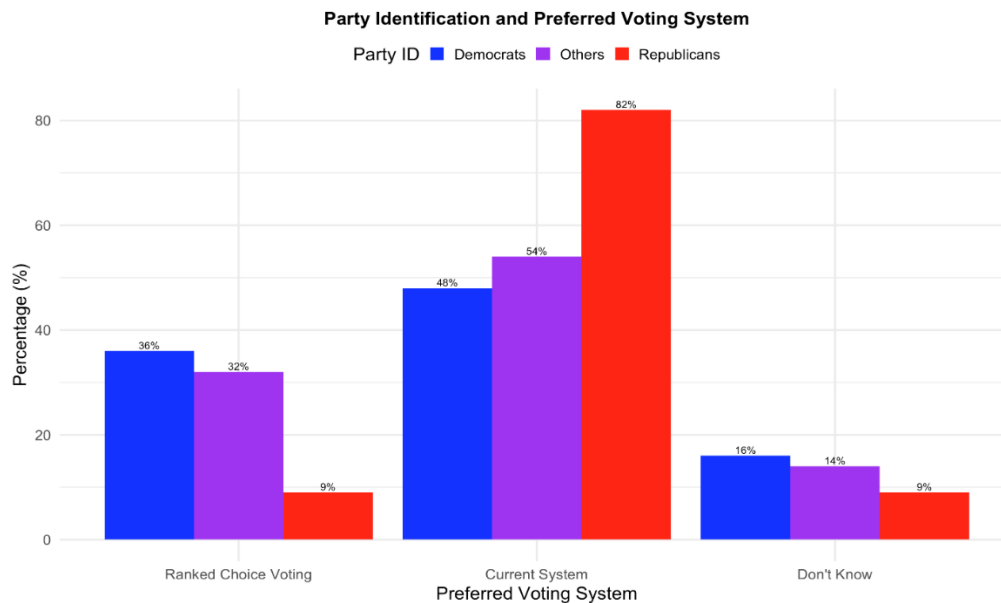
Table 3.14. Would you prefer ballots in your county to be counted by voting machines or by people by hand? By Party

	Democrats	Republicans	Others	Overall
Prefer machine counts to hand counts a lot	47%	33%	33%	39%
Prefer machine counts somewhat	38%	35%	41%	38%
Prefer hand counts somewhat	11%	13%	13%	12%
Prefer hand counts to machine counts a lot	4%	19%	13%	11%

Rank-Choice Voting (RCV)

Finally, we asked about voter support for ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting is used by two cities in New Mexico: Santa Fe and Las Cruces. We find that a majority (62%) of voters prefer the current system where voters select a single candidate as opposed to ranking candidates, which has support from 25% of voters. 13% voters indicate they don't know. These results, however, differ a great deal by party. As shown in Figure 3.9, there is a partisan divide on this with more Democrats (36%) supporting RCV than Republicans (9%), and Independents (32%) but a plurality of Democrats (48%) and majority of Republicans (82%) and Independents (54%) support plurality elections.

Figure 3.9. Support for RCV or Plurality Elections by Party



Appendix A. 2024 New Mexico Election Study Survey Frequency Report

Q1: How did you vote in this fall's general election? (n=5,401)

Absentee/Vote-by-mail (including dropping off a ballot that was mailed to you)	13%
Early in-person at a vote center	59%
Election Day in-person at a vote center or precinct	28%

Q2: How interested were you in this fall's general election? (n=5,401)

Very interested	90%
Somewhat interested	8%
Not too interested	1%
Not at all interested	1%

Q3: How confident are you that YOUR vote in this year's General Election was counted as you intended? (n=5401)

Very confident	60%
Somewhat Confident	29%
Not too confident	7%
Not at all confident	4%

Q4: Think about vote counting throughout your county and not just your own personal situation. How confident are you that votes in your county were counted as voters intended in the 2024 general election? (n=5396)

Very confident	55%
Somewhat Confident	33%
Not too confident	9%
Not at all confident	3%

Q5: Now, think about vote counting throughout New Mexico. How confident are you that votes in New Mexico were counted as voters intended in the 2024 general election? (n=5380)

Very confident	44%
Somewhat Confident	38%
Not too confident	13%
Not at all confident	5%

Q6: Finally, think about vote counting throughout the country. How confident are you that votes nationwide were counted as voters intended in the 2024 general election? (n=5396)

Very confident	31%
Somewhat Confident	42%
Not too confident	18%
Not at all confident	9%

Q7: Thinking in political terms, would you say that you are: (n= 5379)

Very Liberal	18%
Somewhat liberal	17%
Moderate	20%
Somewhat Conservative	20%
Very conservative	18%
Have not thought much it	4%
Don't know	2%

Q8: Do you consider yourself to be any of the following? [mark all that apply] (n=5357)

Socialist-Democrat	16%
Progressive	21%
Communist	2%
Anarchist	2%
MAGA	19%
Tea Party member	2%
Libertarian	9%
Something else	16%
None of the above	33%

Q9: What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n= 5403)

Less than high school	1%
High school graduate	9%
Some college	32%
Associate's degree	19%
Bachelor's degree	15%
Master's degree	18%
PhD/MD/JD	6%

Q10: Why did you request a vote-by-mail ballot? Please mark **all** that apply. (n=1119)

I was going to be out of town for this election	14%
Voting by mail or absentee was just more convenient for me this election	66%
I could not get to the poll on Election Day because of my work or school schedule	10%
I am in the armed forces / a domestic out of state voter/ an overseas voter	5%
I have a physical disability that makes it difficult for me to go to the polls	15%
I was an election official or poll worker	10%
Religious observances would have interfered with my going to the polls	0%

Q11: Have you voted by mail in a previous election or is this your first time? (n=1119)

Yes, I have voted by main in a previous Election	83%
No, this is my first time voting by mail	17%

Q12: Are you on the permanent absentee vote by mail list to automatically be sent an absentee ballot for each statewide election? (n=1117)

Yes	47%
No, I had not heard about it	32%
No	21%

Q13: Did you track your mail ballot online or through text/email messages? (n=1119)

Yes	49%
No	51%

Q14: Which of the following describes the reason(s) you chose NOT to track your ballot? Please mark all that apply. (n=587)

I was not aware that I could track my ballot	47%
I fully trusted my ballot would be received and counted by the election officials	46%
I did not feel comfortable tracking my ballot information online or through text messages	1%
I did not care if my ballot was rejected or did not arrive on time	1%
I was worried my contact information would be used for non-election purposes	4%

Q15: Did you fill out your ballot with anyone else, such as a family member or friend, or did you complete your ballot alone? (n=1119)

Alone	85%
With someone else	15%

Q16: With whom did you complete your ballot? Please mark all that apply. (n=162)

Spouse or Partner	71%
Parent or Parents	12%
Child or Children	6%
Roommate	0%
Friend	7%
Other family member	16%

Q17: When did you return your mail ballot? (n=1117)

After Election Day	0%
On Election Day	4%
A few days before Election Day	14%
Last two weeks of October	39%
First two weeks of October	23%
Sometime in September	4%
Don't remember	16%

Q18: Who returned your ballot or dropped it in the mail? (n=1117)

I did	87%
A member of my immediate family did	9%
My Roommate did	1%
A friend of mine did	0%
A political party or interest group member did	0%
A stranger did	0%
Other	3%

Q19: How did you return your ballot? (n=1120)

At a post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	31%
At an official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	8%
It was picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	26%
A drop box used only for ballots	11%
I dropped it off at the County Clerk's office during early voting	6%
I dropped it off on Election Day at a vote center or the County Clerk's office	4%
I dropped it off at an early voting center	11%
I emailed my ballot	3%

Q20: Why did you decide to drop off your ballot rather than mail the ballot back in? Please mark all that apply. (n=318)

It was very convenient to drop off	39%
I did not trust the USPS to deliver it on time	32%
I did not have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	7%
I wanted to be certain that it arrived	62%

Q21: How difficult or easy was it to find the place where you dropped off your ballot? (n=318)

Very difficult	0%
Somewhat difficult	1%
Fairly easy	14%
Very easy	85%

Q22: Please rate the job performance of the staff at the place where you dropped off your ballot. (n=289)

Excellent	83%
Good	16%
Fair	1%
Poor	0%

Q23: Did you return anyone else's ballot? (n=975)

Yes	84%
No	16%

Q24: Whose ballot(s) did you return? Please mark all that apply. (n=1117)

Spouse or Partner	79%
Parent or Parents	13%
Child or Children	4%
Roommate	0%
Friend	1%
Other family member	11%

Q25: How many ballots did you return, including your own? (n=181)

1	2%
2	86%
3	6%
4	6%

Q26: Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your mail ballot:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My ballot was too long (n=1098)	4%	25%	31%	40%
I kept my ballot and my ballot choices private at home (n=1097)	45%	23%	13%	19%
My ballot privacy was maintained when my vote was counted (n=1081)	62%	29%	5%	4%

Q27: Were you contacted by your local election official because there was a problem with your ballot and it could not be counted? (n=1120)

Yes	2%
No	98%

Q28: Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? (n=919)

Very easy	75%
Somewhat easy	21%
Somewhat hard	3%
Very hard	1%

Q29: Did you fill out a sample ballot before you went to vote? (n=4278)

Yes	25%
No	75%

Q30: Did you register and vote using same day registration? (n= 4278)

Yes	5%
No	95%

Q31: About how many minutes did it take you to register? (n=95, unweighted)

1-5	53
6-10	16
11-15	7
16-20	6
21-25	0
26-30	6
> 31	7

Q32: How many minutes did you wait after registering before getting your ballot? (n=93, unweighted) -SDR/EDR voters only

1-5	73
6-10	5
11-15	4
16-20	1
21-25	2
26-30	4
> 31	4

Q33: How satisfied or unsatisfied were you with the same day registration process? (n=98, unweighted)

Very satisfied	73
Somewhat satisfied	18
Somewhat unsatisfied	4
Very unsatisfied	3

Q34: About how many minutes did you wait in the check-in line before you were able to vote? (n=4165)

1-5	68%
6-10	14%
11-15	7%
16-20	4%
21-25	1%
26-30	3%
31-60	2%
>60	<1%

Q35: Did you know any of the poll workers in the vote center you voted in? (n= 4280)

Yes	15%
No	85%

Q36: When you got to your vote center or polling location, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place near it? [Please mark all that apply.] (n=4281)

Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent	1%
Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people were properly dropping off ballots	0%
Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun	1%
Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who did not seem to be a reporter	1%
People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question	7%
Something else that seemed disruptive	3%
I did not observe any of these things	89%

Q37: In New Mexico the voter gets to choose how they want to be identified at the polls. They can provide (1) their name, address, and birth year, (2) a photo ID, or (3) a non-photo ID. What type of identification did you provide? (n=4277)

Name, address, and birth year	48%
A photo ID (e.g. driver's license, military ID, passport, Sam's club card)	36%
Voter Registration Card	12%
I used a QR code that was sent to me by the county	0%
I showed some other form of identification (Please indicate what you showed)	2%
I don't remember	2%

Q38: Thinking back, did the poll worker ask for a photo or non-photo ID or did you just provide it without being asked? (n=1483)

Poll worker asked for the ID	31%
I just provided it	60%
I don't remember	9%

Q39: Did anyone help you fill out your ballot? (n=4280)

No, no one helped me	99%
Yes, someone helped me	1%

Q40: Who helped you fill out your ballot? (n=26, unweighted)

Spouse or Partner	31%
Parent or Parents	8%
Child or Children	15%
Other family member	4%
Poll Worker	34%
Someone else	8%

Q41: Did you help anyone fill out their ballot? (n=4276)

No, I did not help anyone	97%
Yes, I helped someone	3%

Q42: Whom did you help fill out the ballot? [Mark all that apply] (n=137)

Spouse or Partner	30%
Parent or Parents	24%
Child or Children	21%
Roommate	0%
Friend	7%
Employer	0%
Co-worker	0%
Someone else	8%

Q43: Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the voting location where you voted: (n=4234)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The location was easy to find	68%	28%	2%	2%
I had to go out of my way to reach my vote center or precinct	2%	4%	40%	54%
It was hard to find a place to park	3%	6%	44%	47%
My ballot privacy was protected	57%	39%	3%	1%
The ballot was too long	4%	18%	58%	20%

Q44: How helpful were your poll workers? (n=4277)

Very helpful	78%
Somewhat helpful	18%
Not too helpful	3%
Not at all helpful	1%

Q45: Please answer the following questions on ballot privacy: (n=4281)

	Yes	No
Did someone in line at the polling place ask you who you were voting for?	2%	98%
Did a poll worker look at your voted ballot?	6%	94%
Did you keep your ballot in a privacy sleeve while you were moving around the vote center/precinct?	25%	75%

Q46: Were you contacted by a candidate, party or interest group encouraging you to vote [mark all that apply]: (n=5356)

By mail	55%
In-person early	18%
On Election Day	9%
Just to go vote	29%
I was not contacted by anyone about voting	29%

Q47: How much time did you spend searching for information (reading articles, watching debates, looking at websites) about local city or county candidates before you voted? (n=5396)

None	11%
Less than ½ an hour	12%
½ an hour to an hour	24%
Just over an hour to 2 hours	19%
Over 2 Hours	34%

Q48: Were there any contests for which you looked for information, but you couldn't find much? Please mark all that apply: (n=5346)

No, I found enough information	56%
Yes, I found some information but not enough to decide	9%
Yes, but I did my best to decide anyway	28%
Yes, what I found was for paying subscribers only	2%
Yes, what I found was not trustworthy	6%

Q49: How many contests did you vote on your 2024 ballot? (n=5369)

All contests	68%
Nearly all contests	16%
Most contests	6%
About ½ of all contests	2%
Just a few contests	3%
No contests	5%

Q50: How would you rate your voting experience overall? (n=5399)

Excellent	54%
Good	38%
Fair	7%
Poor	1%

Q51: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or a member of another political party? (n=5354)

Strong Democrat	29%
Democrat	10%
Leaning Democrat	7%
Independent	14%
Leaning Republican	8%
Republican	7%
Strong Republican	25%

Q52: On a scale from 0 (no confidence) to 10 (highest confidence), how confident are you that the results of the election in New Mexico were reported correctly? (n=5401)

0-3	4-7	8-10
8%	22%	70%

Q53: On a scale from 0 (no confidence) to 10 (highest confidence), how sure are you that the voting process in New Mexico was carried out properly and free from fraud or major problems? (n=5400)

0-3	4-7	8-10
11%	24%	65%

Q54: On a scale of 0 (no confidence) to 10 (highest confidence), how confident are you that?

	0-3	4-7	8-10
All ballots that are cast are protected from theft or change in your state? (n= 1341)	7%	26%	67%
Ballots that are cast are protected from theft or change in your state? (n=1354)	10%	25%	65%
Ballots were stolen or changed in your state? (n=2705)	11%	26%	63%

Q55: On a scale of 0 (no confidence) to 10 (highest confidence), how confident are you that?

	0-3	4-7	8-10
All eligible voters can vote in your state? (n=1341)	11%	26%	63%
Eligible voter is denied their chance to vote in your state? (n=2701)	14%	26%	60%
Eligible voters can vote in your state? (n=1358)	16%	25%	59%

Q56: Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important? (n= 5337)

Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	42%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	58%

Q57: Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show a photo ID when they vote? (n=5379)

Support	72%
Oppose	18%
Don't know	10%

Q58: Thinking about election administration, how important or not is it to ensure accurate voter registration rolls, even if some eligible voters are removed and required to re-register for participation in future elections? (n=5338)

Very important	63%
Somewhat important	24%
Somewhat unimportant	9%
Very unimportant	4%

Q59: Regardless of the laws in your state, what should the deadline be for a mail ballot to arrive at the clerk's office to be counted? (n=5348)

Only ballots that arrive before Election Day should be counted	15%
Only ballots that arrive on Election Day or before should be counted	37%
Ballots postmarked by Election Day should be counted as long as they arrive within a certain number of days after the election	48%

Q60: Do you support or oppose allowing citizens to register and vote on the same day? (n=4278)

Support	28%
Oppose	72%

Q61: Do you support or oppose moving all your state and local elections to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting. (n=5346)

Strongly Support	5%
Somewhat support	12%
Somewhat oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	63%

Q62: Would you prefer ballots in your county to be counted by voting machines or by people by hand? (n=5289)

Prefer machine counts to hand counts a lot	39%
Prefer machine counts somewhat	38%
Prefer hand counts somewhat	12%
Prefer hand counts to machine counts a lot	11%

Q63: How much do you trust vote-counting machines to count votes accurately? (n=5346)

Trust a great deal	39%
Trust somewhat	42%
Distrust somewhat	12%
Distrust a great deal	7%

Q64: How much do you trust citizens to count votes accurately by hand? (n=5336)

Trust a great deal	13%
Trust somewhat	52%
Distrust somewhat	27%
Distrust a great deal	8%

Q65: How much do you agree or disagree that every state should have a post-election auditing process to ensure that votes were counted correctly? (n=5333)

Strongly agree	64%
Somewhat agree	31%
Somewhat disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	1%

Q66: Did you know that New Mexico conducts a post-election audit to ensure the vote was counted correctly? (n=5344)

Yes	29%
No	71%

Q67: How much do you support extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds? (n=5347)

Very	8%
Somewhat	12%
Not too much	22%
Not at all	58%

Q68: Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are reassigned to remaining candidates based on the voters' next choices. This process continues until a candidate has a majority votes. Would you prefer that elections in your state use? (n=5341)

Ranked choice voting	25%
The current system where voters select a single candidate and the one with the most votes wins	62%
Don't know	13%

Q69: Did you receive a ballot in the mail that didn't belong to you or anyone in your household? (n=5348)

Yes	4%
No	96%

Q70: How often do you think local election officials make rules or decisions that favor one party or another? (n=2587)

All or almost all of the time	19%
Most of the time	20%
Sometimes	35%
Rarely	14%
Never or almost never	12%

Q71: Which of the following situations did you **personally observe** in the 2024 General Election? [Please mark all that apply.] (n=2187)

Someone bribes a voter or pays for votes	2%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	1%
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	2%
Someone helping someone fill out their ballot in the vote center	7%
Someone using a false identity to vote illegally	1%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	2%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop box	1%
None of these	84%

Q72: New Mexico's in-person voter ID law requires voters to state their address, name, and birth year to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is? (n=2731)

Too Strict	2%
Just right	56%
Not Strict Enough	42%

Q73: What additional information would you require to verify the eligibility of the voter? [Mark all that apply] (n=905)

Signature match	27%
Social Security Number	30%
Driver's license	83%
Witness signature	7%
Something else	26%

Q74: New Mexico's vote-by-mail law requires voters to include the last 4 of their social security number to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is? (n=2713)

Too Strict	4%
Just right	65%
Not Strict Enough	31%

Q75: What additional information would you require to verify the eligibility of a vote-by-mail voter? [Mark all that apply] (n=613)

Signature match	49%
Driver's license number	58%
Witness signature	20%
Copy of Photo ID	73%
Something else	18%

Q76: According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, friends, family, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one? (n=5327)

Impossible, my vote is secret	16%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	31%
It would be somewhat hard	16%
It would be somewhat easy	18%
It would be very easy	11%
Don't know	8%

Q77: Do you think election officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter has voted for? (n=2599)

Yes	34%
No	27%
Don't know/Not sure	39%

Q78: Do you think election officials can more easily identify who you voted for when you use a vote-by-mail ballot, an in-person ballot, or are they about the same? (n=648)

Vote-by-mail is easier to identify	32%
In-person is easier to identify	6%
Equally likely to be identified	62%

Q79: Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in New Mexico. How often do you think each event occurs in New Mexico? (n=5358)

	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Not much	Hardly ever	Never
Eligible voters get mistakenly removed from the voter registration file during purges/clean-up	5%	37%	28%	24%	6%
A non-US citizen votes	16%	27%	12%	25%	20%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	2%	23%	27%	34%	14%
Ballots are tampered with to change votes	4%	18%	24%	29%	25%
People submit too many ballots in drop boxes on behalf of others	8%	28%	22%	27%	15%
Someone pretends to be another person and votes for them	6%	31%	17%	33%	12%
Voting machines fail to count votes accurately	4%	24%	23%	34%	15%

Q80: For whom did you vote in the race for President? (n=5107)

Donald Trump (Republican)	45%
Kamala Harris (Democrat)	50%
Third party/other	4%
Did not vote in this contest	1%

Q81: For whom did you vote in the race for U.S. Senate? (n=5081)

Martin Heinrich (Democrat	53%
Nella Domenici (Republican)	42%
Did not vote in this contest	5%

Q82: Whom did you vote in the race for U.S. House? (n=5052)

The Republican candidate (Steve Jones, Yvette Herrell, Sharon E. Clahchischilliage	43%
The Democratic candidate (Melanie Ann Stansbury, Gabriel Vasquez, Teresa Leger Fernandez)	54%
Did not vote in this contest	3%

Q83: What issue mattered most to you in this election? [Please select only one] (n=2578)

Inflation/the economy	21%
Abortion	6%
Immigration	14%
Threats to democracy	35%
Education	2%
Crime	3%
Climate Change	4%
National Security/Foreign Affairs/Wars	5%
Freedom of Speech	7%
Other	3%

Q84: Compared to a year ago, how are each of the following doing economically?

	Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat worse	Much worse
You and your family (5287)	6%	15%	39%	25%	15%
New Mexico economy (n=5329)	4%	16%	31%	27%	22%
US National economy (n=5231)	6%	18%	20%	26%	30%

Q85: During the past year, did you? (n=2718)

	Yes	No
Attend local political meetings (n=2679)	15%	85%
Put up a political sign (n=2678)	18%	82%
Work for a candidate or campaign (n=2678)	5%	95%
Attend a political protest, march, or demonstration (n=2679)	9%	91%
Contact a public official (n=2686)	29%	71%
Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization (n=2691)	30%	70%
Donate blood (n=2668)	14%	86%

Q86: During the past year how much did you donate to candidates, campaigns, and political organizations? (n=1167)

\$100 or less	48%
Between \$100 and \$499	36%
Between \$500 and \$999	9%
Between \$1,000 and \$4,999	6%
Between \$5,000 and \$9,999	1%
\$10,000 or more	0%

Q87: Do you support or oppose increasing fossil fuel production in the U.S.? (n=2535)

Support	53%
Oppose	47%

Q88: Do you support or oppose denying access to asylum for immigrants who cross the US-Mexico border illegally? (n=2654)

Support	42%
Oppose	58%

Q89: Please rate how you feel towards the following groups and individuals. A score of 0 means you are very cold to them, while a score of 10 means you are very warm to them, and a score of 5 means that you are neither cold nor warm to them. (n= 2706)

	0-3	4-7	8-10	Average
Democratic Party	34%	39%	27%	5
Republican Party	45%	32%	23%	4.2
President Joe Biden	48%	32%	20%	4.02
Vice President Kamala Harris	46%	25%	29%	4.34
President Donald Trump	51%	21%	28%	3.98
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham	45%	29%	26%	4.2
Your Election Supervisor/County Clerk	11%	59%	30%	6
The New Mexico Legislature	30%	53%	17%	4.68
The University of New Mexico	45%	29%	26%	5.91
The New Mexico Supreme Court	17%	63%	20%	5.27
Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver	23%	54%	23%	5.15

Q90: What is your age? (n=5291)

18-29	13%
30-44	21%
45-64	32%
65 or older	34%

Q91: Which racial and/or ethnic groups do you consider yourself a member of? (n=5202)

White	52%
Hispanic	37%
Native American	7%
Black	2%
Other	2%

Q92: How would you describe your Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin? (n=780)

Cuban	1%
Mexican	43%
Spanish	47%
Puerto Rican	1%
Central American	1%
South American	1%
Something else	6%

Q93: Do you belong to a union? (n=5259)

Yes	9%
No	91%

Q94: Would you say where you live in? (n=5266)

A city	46%
A suburban area	22%
A rural area	32%

Q95: What is your gender? (n=5241)

Male	45%
Female	53%
Other	2%

Appendix B. Methodology: Sampling and Contact Rates

Overview

This report details the sampling methodology and statistical methodology used to derive the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Contact Rates for the 2024 New Mexico Election Study. The study utilized a complex, multi-mode design (Email and Postcard) across several distinct sampling frames, including a pre-recruited panel, simple random samples, an oversample of low-propensity responders, and a complete sample of all voters with public emails.

Sampling Frames and Modes

- **Mail (Postcard):** A total of 25,081 postcards were mailed to a stratified sample of registered voters, including a targeted oversample of 4,065 individuals and 7,016 from Sandoval County. Postcards were delivered starting December 16, 2024.
 - **Sandoval Experiment:** This subset was designed to test the efficacy of a field intervention in several locations, dates, and times in Sandoval County. We included all individuals who voted in person at the locations and times that received the intervention, as well as all individuals who voted in person at the same locations and either on the same dates but different times, or the same times and adjacent dates (one day earlier or later) (control group). Postcards were not sent to individuals who had already responded to the Sandoval email invitation (described below) by the time postcards were printed or to the NMES panelist invitations (described below). The denominator includes only those who were sent a postcard.
 - **NM Random:** This subset was drawn from the general population of voters who voted in New Mexico in 2024. Individuals were sampled using a simple random sampling method from a randomly partitioned half of the voter history file, without any additional stratification or weighting. Postcards were not sent to individuals who were also sampled for the Sandoval experiment, so each voter who received an initial postcard invitation received only one such invitation. The denominator for this stratum includes only those who were sent a postcard and excludes those in the Sandoval experiment.
 - **NM Oversample:** This subset was designed to increase representation of specific demographic groups, based on response propensities from the 2020 wave. Individuals were selected using inverse logit probabilities based on age, party affiliation, race, gender, and vote mode. This sample was drawn from the other half of the voter file that was not used for the NM Random sample and therefore does not overlap with the NM Random sample. Again, postcards were not sent to individuals who were also sampled for the Sandoval experiment. The denominator for this stratum includes only those who were sent a postcard and excludes those in the Sandoval experiment.

- **Email:** A total of 170,924 email invitations were sent to registered voters, including 5,067 NMES panelists and 7,967 individuals in the Sandoval experiment. The email survey was in the field from November 16, 2024 to February 12, 2025.
 - **NMES Panelists:** These individuals include all individuals who participated in a previous wave of the NMES and who voted in 2024.
 - **Initial Sandoval Email:** This subset includes all individuals with a valid email address who voted in 2024 in Sandoval County.
 - **Email Only:** We contacted all other individuals in the voter file with a valid email address who voted in 2024, excluding those who had been contacted in another stratum. When multiple voters shared an email address, we selected one individual at random to receive the email invitation.

Data Deduplication

Because the study involved multiple contact waves, including initial invitations, reminders, and a final email wave, a hierarchical deduplication process was required.

- **Identity Linking:** Using the 2024 NM vote history file, respondents were tracked via unique IDs to ensure that individuals may have been contacted across different modes or reminder mailings were not double-counted in the denominator. While we made a best effort to ensure that each individual only received one initial invitation, some respondents in the Sandoval experiment received both email and postcard invitations (e.g. if they had a valid email address and voted in one of the treatment locations, and had not already responded to the email invitation by the time postcards were printed).
- **Single Best Outcome:** We applied a “Best Outcome” hierarchy to assign a single final disposition to each case. If a respondent appeared in multiple distribution files, their status was coded based on the highest level of engagement: *Complete* > *Partial* > *Contact* > *Non – Contact*.

Disposition Categorization

Raw status codes from Qualtrics and mail logs were mapped to AAPOR Standard Definitions to ensure cross-study comparability.

- **Complete (I):** Surveys marked as finished.
- **Partial (P):** Surveys partially finished or sessions that expired.
- **Contact (C/O):** Instances where a human was apparently reached but no interview resulted. This includes “Email Opened” statuses and successful postcard deliveries without a completed survey.
- **Ineligible (IE):** Permanent delivery failures, specifically **Email Hard Bounces** and postcards returned as undeliverable.
- **Unknown (UH):** Email soft bounces

Weighting the Oversample

The NM oversample utilized a non-proportional design based on inverse logit response propensities.

$$W_i = \frac{1}{Pr(Selection)_i} \quad (1)$$

Propensities are computed from the 2022 NMES response rate based on coarsened age, party, race, gender, and vote mode.

Calculation of Contact Rate 2 (CON2)

We calculate the AAPOR Contact Rate 2 (CON2) using the following formula:

$$e = \frac{\text{Known Eligible}}{\text{Known Eligible} + \text{Known Ineligible}} \quad (2)$$

$$CON2 = \frac{(I + P) + R + O}{(I + P) + R + NC + O + e(UH + UO)} \quad (3)$$

Results

The following table summarizes the final contact rates across the major strata and modes of the study.

Table 1: AAPOR Contact Rate (CON2) Summary across Modes and Strata

Sampling Stratum	Invited (N)	Contacts	Ineligible	Rate
<i>I. Mail</i>				
All Postcards	25,081	1,534	710	6.29%
(weight adjusted)				8.31%
NM Oversample	4,065	269	116	6.81%
(weight adjusted)				8.87%
NM Random	14,000	815	484	6.03%
Sandoval Experiment	7,016	450	110	6.52%
<i>II. Email Only</i>				
Initial Sandoval Email	7,967	4,054	273	52.70%
All Other Email	170,924	34,689	6,399	21.08%

III. NMES Panelists (Email)

NMES Panelist	5,067	3,393	101	68.32%
Total (Unweighted)	210,039	43,670	7,483	21.56%

Note: Contacts include Completes, Partial, and Emails Opened.
Ineligibles represent hard bounces and returned postcards.

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